

201

S O N G S

OF THE

NOON AND NIGHT.

BY

M. ELVA WOOD.



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M. ELVA WOOD,

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DEDICATION.

TO

The Memory

OF MY

BELOVED MOTHER.





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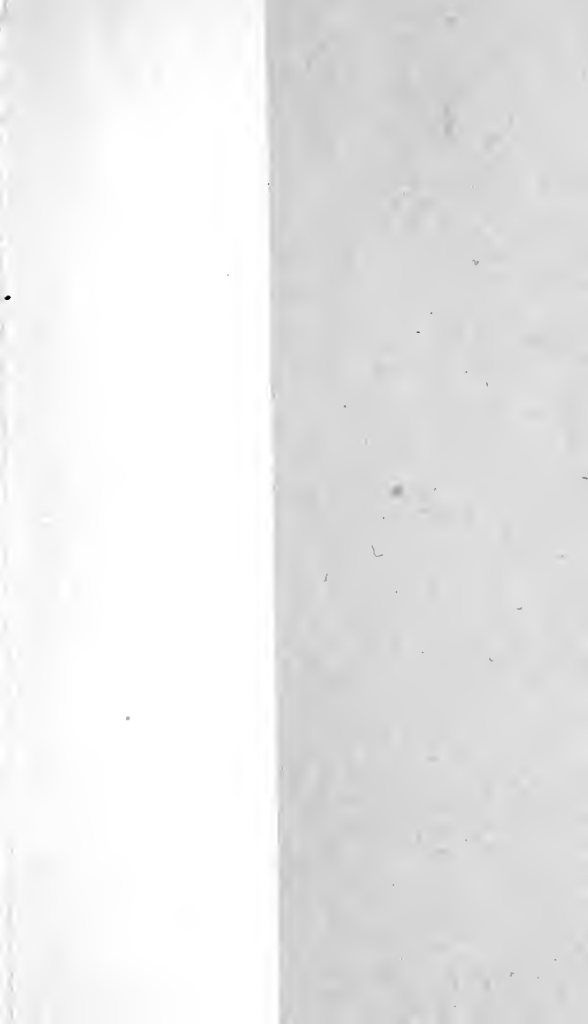
P R E L U D E .

I STOOD within the solemn wood and heard,
From the far-sounding beach the wild sea moan;
And 'mid the cloister of the hills I saw,
The softly flowing river murmuring on.
Around me, bloomed the fragrant anemone
In glossy clusters, freighting all the air
With the rich perfume of its honied breath;
And clinging vines and lowly blossoms sweet,
Lent their small meed of beauty to the scene.

The waterfall its crystal wealth sent down
Among the grey old rocks; and echo's voice
Repeated its glad music to the hills.

While far away, along the radiant blue,
The white clouds freighted by a bounteous hand,
On their swift mission hasted to restore
The wasted stream, or fill the emptied pool :
Where patient herds with meek, contented eyes,
In noontide heat shall lap the cooling tide,
And look the thanks, that even man withholds.

White glowed the harvest : flecking all the plain
With glimmering gold ; and nearer by, the boughs
Of the full orchard, swung up to the light
Its mellow treasures, to invite the taste,
Or wake the heart to gentle gratitude.
And as I gazed upon these breathing things,
Inanimate, yet eloquent, as with souls
They spoke, a gentle voice came whispering unto me,
Lute-like and still. Like as the dreamy sound
Of vesper-music ; or the spirit tones





Of a remembered song, whose echoes float,
Far from the faded Past, and only wake
Their sweet uncertain strains on Memory's lyre.

And, since that day, this gentle voice hath been
Singing its pleasant stories in my breast,
Till I have learned to love its lulling sound :
Sometimes to woo its tender ebb and flow
In hymns of praise : unto th' great One who sits
Throned in the Heavens ! In whose hands are held
The golden balances ! Wherewith He brings
Judgment and Justice unto the Nations,—
That call to Him like children at His feet.

Of humbler themes too it hath sung : of Time
And Change, his truest friend ; and oft
Of Beauty too,—the light of Woman's eyes ;
And of the Trees,—the golden glow and sheen

Of lovely Nature, in her garlands drest.
Of youthful Love,—albeit the theme too sad,
The tender tones grow tremulous and fail,
Heavy with tears ; and mine own eyes o'erflow
With bearing them sweet sympathy.


And now,

Like frailest pearls, bound by the slenderest string,
I have been weaving some of these strange songs
For mortal eyes.

Even as you gaze

On Nature's lowly gifts : the tinted shell,
The shining pebble, or the humble flower,
That on the stormy strand or desolate moor
Reads its kind lesson to the mourning heart,
So look on these ; and pass them by as things
The mind may own as trifles : that lured thy glance
And pleased thee for an hour ; and, gentle reader,
Know I ask no more.

TO A MOUNTAIN LILY.

ALE flower upon the moor !
When o'er the starry floor

Of the new Heaven, flashed the virgin light ;

Methinks the vestal sod,

Warmed by the breath of God,

Teemed with the glory of thy spotless white.

Then, when the Earth was young

From her pure bosom sprung

Thy radiant beauty, like an incense sweet :

And still thy snowy heart

Seems like a prayer apart,

Where all good thoughts, and tender meanings meet.

And though the blackened pall

Of sin, hath covered all,

And blood and wrong hath marked the tracks of men ;
 Upon this mountain way
 I meet thee here to-day,
Thy innocent beauty, pure and white as then.

 Here joining the glad psalm
 That hovers like a balm,
Down from the pages of Nature's lovely book ;
 Thou dost His blessed will
 In all thy life fulfill ;
With breathings soft, and mild contented look.




MELANIUS.





MELANIUS.

A STORY OF THE CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION UNDER
VALERIAN.*

HE sun rose bright on Rome : and from
the sea,

Flashed the red glory of his glowing shield ;
Emblazoning with deep scintilating gold
The thousand marble palaces that rose,
Like fretted glaciers, massive, broad, and grand,
Above the city walls. Dark between,

* The hint of this Poem was suggested by the incidents given of the conversion of Alciphron to Christianity, through the instrumentality of a young Christian maiden, an Egyptian, to whom he was betrothed, and who suffered martyrdom at that time.

Dim Temples lifted high their shining domes,
Huge, and casting far grey frowning shadows,
Where evermore within the purple shade,
Swayed the blue banners of the incense breath.

It was a gala day. From early dawn
Gay floating streamers sent their crimson lines
Along the sky ; and music's voice was heard
In thrilling echoes, where the ardent throng,
In swift and changing eddies, to and fro,
Shifted and wavered on the dusty way :
In eager haste to hail the coming show,
That from the Campus Martius, when the Noon
Sent down his fires upon the Tiber's wave,
Was heralded to come. Even as the winds
With tides unsteady, and full overfraught
Tremble with storm upon the frowning sky ;
Till poised at last, sweep down in scathing lines,

So moved the pageant bold. A long array,
Headed by braying trumpeters, that shook
With clash, and din, the smoky, dusty airs :
Horsemen in glinting armors bearing flags
Blood-stained and worn—trophies of old wars—
Soldiers with open swords, virgins and priests,
Over their swaying censors chaunting songs
Unto the imaged gods they bore along,
And last of all, following the gilt-horned beasts
For sacrifice, a bowed and silent band
With saddened brows, and eyes that humbly bent
Forevermore their glances to the ground :
In solemn thought enwrapt ; oblivious all
Unto the hollow show, save that they trod
With scarred and shackled feet the weary way.

And who are these ?

The bounden ones ! The Captives !
Trophies they, that iron Power and Hate

Have sifted out from His fair, peaceful Kingdom :
Have gathered in by cruel mandate stern,
From the far desert-lands, where, like lorn sheep
Shorn of their shepherd, they had huddled down
In dark Elethyan caves, beside the banks
Of the lone friendly Nile. Drinking the dews,
With the wild antelopes amid the rocks,
And gathering up the slender herbage there
To eke the life, well spent in praising God—
The Christian's God : wherefore they have come
Like lambs unto the slaughter—still, and dumb !

Slow knolled the mournful tabor 'neath the domes
Of the dark pillared Forum ; where they knelt—
This little band knelt low upon the floor—
Knelt down amid their tears and helpless woe
Within the shadow of the judgment seat :
Where masked in royal purples sat the Judge ;

And at his side the fiendish Orcus, now
From his far Memphian Temples come,
To bring quick doom upon these Christian hearts :
That kept within them Faith's pure vestal fires,
And owned the Christian's God, the only and the true.

“Unto the gods ! lo ! now the incense pour !—
Unto the gods we worship ! Know the hand
Or lip that shall refuse such homage here,
Ere yet the morrow shall have dawned shall pay
Its penal tribute to the angry gods !
Ere yet the morrow shall have dawned, shall feel
The flame's hot breath, the rack, the stinging wheel !”
Around them gleaming like a wall of steel,
In the red sunlight, flashed the soldiers' arms :
Above them, twining in its murky folds
The glowing glory of the parting day,

Arose the incense cloud, from idol shrines,
That burned and glimmered on the solemn walls.

And some were there whose spirits sank in fear :
Sunk down in dread at such appalling doom,
And with relenting heart, they dropt the boon
Of frankincense upon the idol shrine.
Not that they loved not Him, but life the more,
And so they bought it, thus denying Him.

But some there were whose iron wills abreast
The coming storm, felt not its gloom within ;
But stood, in that dark hour as strong and calm,
As they had been beneath the solemn skies
Of the far desert-land whence they had come :
Whence they had brought their lives as in their hands
An offering free unto love's altar pure,

For His sweet sake. In that they rather die,
Than living, might not love and worship Him.

And there was one among these faithful few—
An old man bent with years, yet standing tall
Above the crowd ; like a grand monarch tree,
Whose towering hight makes all its fellows less :
And at his side, a maiden young and fair ;
Clinging as clings the vine upon the oak :
The Hermit he.

He had fed his flock

On pleasant things ; had taught their feet the way
As Paulus taught, who now had gone, and passed
The woeful gate—the strange, dark gate of Death.
And swaying with his hand as he would speak,
The old man fronted to the Judge and said :—
“ Most noble Sirs ! Most noble Orcus, hear !
Before you stands Melanius. He who once

Trod these proud streets with glad and careless mien,
In the bright summer of his early prime
The gayest of the gay.

Amid the scenes,
Where Folly led, or Pleasure beckoned on,
His willing feet were fleetest ; and where strove
In Learning's sacred halls the budding mind,
His brow ne'er lacked its palm. In the fair games
His crown was often won. And when red War
Rung his wild clarion, to the field he went,
With baldrick gay, and sprung his glittering lance
To its red hilt ! deep in the foe's hot blood.—
For her, whose love was nearest next his heart ;—
His Rome ! His best loved Rome !

But these are past. There was a light that shone
From a far city : its radiance fell
Into his spirit's night. Its blessing came,

From One whose home is in the skies ; and here,
In this poor scroll, Melanius reads His words :—
‘ I am the Lord thy God ! Beside me there is none !
‘ I made the sea, and all that is therein.
‘ The Heavens and the Earth, and all therein.
‘ The stars I made ; and call them by their names !
‘ Thou shalt not bow to any God but me,
‘ I am the Lord thy God ! the only, and the true !”

Then, as a solemn awe had gathered down
And crept its silence over heart and tongue,
No voice spake answer unto him : and he
Continuing said : “ These little ones bowed here
Like storm-swept trees, He gave to me ; and I
Have led them as a feeble old man could,
With tears and prayers. E’er pointing to the way
That leadeth to the brighter, better home.

Melanius asks no mercy : he has come,
To give his life an offering unto Him
Who gave His own for His lost children's sake.
The old must die.—It were an easy task
To stop the halting throb, and still the pulse
Of the old tree when numb in every limb :
When feeling oft unto its inner core
The damps of dull decay.

Even were it left
'Twould have at best, but few more days to run.
But some are here for whom Melanius pleads ;
For whom, alas ! his aged heart now bleeds—
These innocent ones : this tender summer flower
Clinging beside me, my gentle foster child,—
The whitest lamb in all the little flock.
Most Noble Orcus !

For the sake of one
Who dying gave her to me, in the land

Of thine own Alexandria, where she,
A priestess in the Memphian temples taught :
This child beside her at thy holy altars,
Caressing oft the sacred Ibis bird
That spread its gorgeous plumage o'er the shrine
Of thine own Isis : in that her hands
Have served among the rites thou most approvest,
O, spare the child ! and old Melanius
Asks of thee no more !”

He ceased : and through the solemn stillness there
Looking afar to where the setting sun
Sank low behind the dim Palatian hills,
His steady gaze grew fixed, and stern, as he
Some vision saw. Then shuddering as a-cold,
And blanching white, as if a shaft unseen
Had struck into his heart, he sank !—he fell !
Melanius was no more !

The God he loved,
Loved him : and dawning there as in the days
Of the old Prophets, lo ! the steeds of fire !
And Israel's chariot ! come to rescue him,
And bear him up before the Mighty Throne !



“Jesu, son of Calvary !

Jesu merci ! Pity me !”

Within the darkness of a prison cell,
Where heavy shadows gathered like a pall
Around her youthful form : a maiden fair
Knelt down in tears to pray. Upon her brow
Clung the red martyr's wreath.* On her breast

* “ A poisonous compound, made to resemble coral, with which it was the custom to adorn the brows of young martyrs on the day of their immolation—so insidious in its effects, that death was often produced long before the hour of execution.

Shone the white silver of the Christian cross :
And in her clasped hands, the holy rood,
Oft pressed unto her lips ; where evermore
Arose the tearful burden of her soul.

Beside her, gleaming in the ghastly light
Of a pale naptha prison-lamp, looked down
The hideous features of the idol dumb :
Upon whose shrine, she now was left to cast
The saving boon of incense. Disowning thus
The sacred vows of her young Christian faith.
Alethe, she—the only life of all
That had survived the terrors of the day.
Who, for the sake of her young beauty's bloom
And childlike innocence, by the implacable judge
Reprieved a few short hours ; thus length'ning out
The sorrows of the doom that waited her.

And treading there, with the quick restless step
Of one who buffets with a hopeless woe,—
Alciphron :—he, whose true and faithful love,
Had like an anchor held through all the storm
That had swept o'er them, since the far off day
When first they met : when from the vestal depths
Of the unplummeted wells within his soul,
Her budding beauty had drawn up the thoughts
That linked his life to hers.

Then, as the mind
Hopes against hope, and knowing it too, to wall
The heart against the Colchis of despair,
Still grasps the straw, he loosed the wearing tide
Of grief and passion unto her, and said :
“ Alethe, look on me ! If aught thou lovest—
In that thou carest not for thy sweet life,
Yet pity have for mine ! For I am naught :
Or being more, would rather like these stones

Poise in the balance of insensate things,
Than feel my life, and be bereft of thee !”

“ There was a time, when unto me there came
No thought but death. I asked, why had the gods
To Nature given more than unto man !
The trodden clod beneath his feet, renews
Its youth and freshness ! The inanimate trees,
Feel in the gloom of death the latent fire
That wakes amid the ashes of decay,
And fans to life and beauty all once lost ;—
The burning stars, that roll above his head
Their never-fading fires through centuries vast,
Are they not more than he ?

But unto me,

Like the faint glimmer of the tardy day,
Along thy Christian creed there comes a light
That hints the soul immortal. Yet upon

These dim uncertain lines beyond the dust,
There is a void, at which Philosophy
And sober Reason clutches—but they fall !”

Then, melting to a kinder mood, spake on :
“ See ! yonder, my beloved ! how the fair Night
In all her radiant beauty pleads with thee :
How smiles Diana on the whispering stream !—
The tender stars, so like thine own deep eyes,
Seem hazed with tears. The murmuring winds—
All Nature pleads with thee, Alethe mine,
Thy purpose to forbear ! And wouldst thou make
Thy god a Moloch ? that he doth require
Babes and innocents for His sacrifice ?
Nay ! ’Tis a simple thing—a trifling form at most :
Throw here this little grain within the cup ;
Or I—with mine own hand—will feed the flame ;
For know, Alethe mine, all other hope is lost !”

Then raised the maiden her fast paling face,
And in low tones, that like the parting wave,
Grew fainter and more far, she answered him :
“ Alciphron, my betrothed !

Hath not my love

Run out unto thee as the summer streams ?
Hath not my soul been as the steady needle that obeys
The faithful calling of its magnet star !
And thou hast been to me even as the dew
That falls upon the fainting desert flower.

But now the hour comes that we must part.
He who hath formed my soul now bids it stand,
A faithful witness for His fair truth's sake—
And He shall give the strength. Hath He not said,
‘ Lo ! I am with you, even unto the end !
And though ye walk through th' dark valley of Death,
My rod and staff, shall they not comfort you ?’

“If on the morrow I am called to pass
The quick baptism of the martyr’s flame,
He will not leave me ; but transpiercing it
With His own glory, win away the pain,
And lead me out to the celestial home.

Even now I feel the armor of His strength
Supporting me ; and in my ear there seems
The whispering accents of the better land.
The stream looks not so dark : Lo ! now,
Like a fair vision dawning from afar,
The snowy garments of the shining ones !
And glowing in the midst, a brighter robe :
And He who wears it, beckons out to me !
Ah ! Yes !—I know ’tis He !—the printed hands
I know—I come ! I come !

‘ Jesu, Son of Calvary !

Jesu merci ! Pity me ! ’ ”

So passed the faithful spirit to the goal
Of the far bright Unseen, whose golden gates
Are ever open to the pure in heart.





MISCELLANEOUS.





TRINITY BELLS.

SWEET bells of Trinity !
Pleasantly your song

Floats on the sky

Its mellow tones along :

Comes like the murmur

Of a Sabbath hymn

Softly, above the clamor

Of thy city's din :

Above the turmoil

Of the busy street,

And the quick treading

Of hastening feet,

Your lulling voice
Breaks out upon the air,
Filling the weary heart
With holy thoughts of prayer.

Welcome your tones
In many a dreary place :
Where toils the weary hand,
And bends the paling face ;
Oh ! happy singers, ye,
To young and old—
Unto the laborer pale
And to the man of gold.

A cheerful minstrel, too,
Of stern old Time—
Keeping his cruel record
With such merry chime ;

Unchanging still
Through all the changing years,
Your own minstrel heart
Unknown to woe and tears !


There comes no tremor
From your stony fane,
When falls in numbers slow
The funeral strain ;
Calm and unfaltering
From your brazen tongue
Echoes the requiem—
Or the wedding song.

In coming years,
When shall have passed away,
The heart and harp
That wakes in song to-day

Your praise ; unchanged shall be
Your merry chime,
Sweet bells of Trinity !



THE FANTASIA.

 INEHAHA ! Min-wa-wa !
Running out upon the hours,

With a sweet and mellow cadence

Like the dropping vernal showers—

Like the patter on the leaves,

Or the dripping of the eaves.

Softly as the tears of Isis,

Gently as the honey dew,

Melting low, till all things tender

It seems telling me and you.

In its limpid ebb and flow

Hear the water come and go !

Now it minds us of the singing,
Where the pleasant summer streams
Through the fragrant, flowery copses,
Twinkle up their sunny gleams—
Silver lines along the meadows
With changing lights and shadows.

Now it tells us of the river,
With a low, sad undertone ;
And we hush our breath to listen
To the melancholy moan.—
Till our spirits catch the shade
That the solemn sounds have made.

Then we hear the rushing fountains
In the dim and lonely wood ;
Hear the sounding waters waking
All the purple solitude—

Trembling echoes leap and start
Till they vibrate to the heart !

Hearken ! to the silvery rustle,

Hear the rippling melody

Of the white waves, as they murmur


Down beside the summer sea !

Hushing in the silence now,

Hear the laughing water flow !



THE SPARROW GUEST.

T was the winter solstice : and I sat
In the low window seat, the cheerless noon
Casting its shadows o'er me 'till they fell
Down mid the dust and care within my heart
Hungry and cold already ; and I thought
'Twere little pity were it colder still
So that 'twere numb, and never more
Might long for summers that it could not know.
When, in the lullings of the storm, there came
A gentle tapping low : such as we hear
In pleasant spring-time, when the vernal showers
Patter their glistening feet against the pane.
And lo ! where the grey woodbine clung against the
wall,

Two starry eyes looked out amid the snow
With a warm eloquence, as they would say :
“ This is a sorry day ! Hast thou no cheer
For a poor pilgrim of the sky like me ? ”

Then with a hand obedient to the call
Of sorrow, in whatever humble form,
With slow and cautious touch I poised the bar—
Trembling lest I might fright the fluttering breast,
So homeless and forlorn, with thought of harm.
When, with quick sense acute to breath of flowers,
Scenting the white camelia's soft perfume,
And feeling the warm summer of the room,
She ventured in : showing sweet confidence,
As she had never heard (O sin accursed !)
Of hunter's aim, or deadly fowler's snare.


Through the long days of gloom, on daintiest fare
She fed, pluming the azure of her slender wing

Amid acacia blooms, or choosing oft
The berried holly on the pictured wall.
Bearing me cheerful company at eve,
Would sit and sing a low sweet symphony,
Telling the stories she had learned afar
In the green shadows of her native wood.
But on one morn, when the pale sun grew red,
Flashing his fervid glances through the air
Till all the far off hills and faded downs
Wore the deep yellow that foretells the spring,
Her glance grew restless, looking oft and long
To where the horizon glimmered up like gold,
She sought the open bar ; and trimming up
With preparation quick her neat attire,
Pausing a moment, chirping on the sill,
Away she hied ! with pinions fleet and strong,
Throwing the brightness from her purple wing
Back to my longing eyes, as on she sped

To meet the summer coming o'er the sea.
And there are other sparrows, with sad eyes,
Looking up timidly amid the storm,
Whose sorrows bridged but for a little space
By kindly hand, shall send a brightness back
Upon thy way, when He shall say, "Well done !
For inasmuch as ye have given to these
My little ones, so have ye done to me."



WINE.

ILL the goblet to the brim !
How they sparkle !

How they swim,—
Foam-beads, on the surface bright
Melting away in rosy light.
Flashing diamonds
Wink and shine
In the fragrant ruby wine.

Fill the glittering gilded cup
With the nectar—
Fill it up.
Never mind the poison there,
It is sweet, and it is fair.

We will laugh
Away old Time,
As we drink the purple wine.

Let the luscious pleasure flow
Till midnight hours
Come and go :
Till the cheek with fever flushes
And the maddened life-tide gushes
Through the pulses.
How divine,
Is the twinkling crimson wine !

Fill again, O, fill the bowl !
My brain seems burning,
And my soul
Is all anguish. See ! O see !
Demons laugh, and menace me.

Ha ! ha ! ha !

O brother mine

I am dying, but—give me wine !

* * * *

Dig the grave. Still and deep

Let a fallen

Brother sleep.

'Gentle breezes, softly blow,

Fragrant boughs, sway to and fro.


Sad, sad fate !

Shall it be thine ?

Hark ye ! shun the maddening wine.



NOTRE DAME.

 HERE'S a pale light on the altar : like a
sacred flame it glows !

Hark ! a soundless wail is rising : from each lip it
flows !

And the organ-tones are sobbing high up in the
arches dim,

Till they seem like sighing mourners pleading tear-
fully to Him.

From the solemn walls above us, look the sainted
faces down.

One—the fairest and the purest, still it wears the
thorny crown.

In the gloom, lo ! History's pages, written o'er with
wrong and blood ;

But the reddened annals tell us, how the Christian
loved his God.

Here, from Life's quick sweeping tempest, sad and
weary ones have come,

Where in barren desert places, they have trod in
tears alone ;

And their troubled eyes are bearing all their sorrow
and their sin,

To the holy One who listens between the
cherubim.

Now every arm is reaching to touch the garments
bright,

Within the spirit's darkness to woo the saving
light.

And every mourner hastens down to the Jordan
shore :

As King Naaman, the leper, in the storied days
of yore.

While the organ-tones are sobbing, and the mourn-
ful bell is rung ;


And like a blessing o'er us the censer's breath is
swung :

While on the snowy altar sways the pale light
evermore,

And every knee is bending on the old cathedral
floor.



SONG OF THE DESERT JASPER.

 HAVE come ! I have come ! from the
 silent land,

Where the tombs of Egypt's monarchs stand :
And the beautiful rays of my jewel dyes,
Were gathered 'neath Afric's mournful skies.

Where sounds the wash of the old Nile's waves,
Like a requiem low by the nameless graves,
My home hath been ; through Ages gone ;
But Time hath not marred the jasper stone.

A listener was I at his hoary side,
When Alexandria sat in her queenly pride

Beside the sea ! When the feast was spread,
And the song gushed free from lips now dead !

Together we heard the tramp of War,
And the clash of th' Roman scimeter !
When the stately tread of a Cæsar fell
To the world's heart like a solemn knell.

We heard the tramp of the knightly band,
As they sped their way to the Holy Land :
When the Saracen shout and Turk's war cry
Rung its " Alla ackbar !" along the sky :

When England's blood fell down like rain,
On the shining sands of Ramula's plain !
And many a princely form was laid
'Neath the lone Lebanon cedar's shade.

Lords of fair castles over the sea,
Had none to mark their grave but me ;
As they slept in their banner-shroud, with none
To raise the tablet or monument stone.

O, the song I sing all Nature fills !
'Tis the song of the rocks. The song of the hills—
The mountain's grandeur, the ocean's roar,
Echo its burden o'er and o'er.

'Tis the fading greatness of man ! whose power
And brightest honors fade with the hour—
Whose mightiest records crumble to dust !
Where the line is stilled 'neath the finger of rust.



CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

FROM the broad fire the red light leaps,
And gladdens all the whitened wall ;
And round the grateful hearth to-night

Gay voices rise and fall :

In merry tones of mirth and song,
Swiftly the hours glide along.

In fragrant tufts the fresh green ferns

Are clustered in quiet nooks apart :

Over the grey old battle-scenes,

And sorrowful stories of the heart.

Making their dimness bright with bloom,

Lading the air with soft perfume.

I close mine eyes and think of one,
Whose vacant chair is near me now ;
Who used to sit on Christmas night,
With folded hand, and saintly brow :
Telling the story of the star
That burned in Judah's skies afar !

To the great Unseen she hath gone forth,
With spotless robes, and faith serene,
And O ! her blissful presence gone,
Life is not what it once hath been :
With solemn step I tread alone,
Its weary days out, one by one.

Then blame me not, if round the hearth
One love is lingering in the Past—
If tears that all unbidden flow,
Should o'er thy mirth one shadow cast :
As faded leaves, in early spring,
Death's shadow to the birth-time bring.

L I F E .



THOU fleeting, palpitating thing !

What is it that we call when we say Life?—

Fretted and goaded through all ages gone,

Yet still around us with sorrows ever rife.

Things that we count but as the dust, and naught ;

Still tremulous and full of all thy strength :

Suffering and sobbing through their little day,

'Till fallen and crushed, beneath the heel at length.

Things that we see not, throbbing with thy soul,

Though ephemeral and passing as a dream :

Linking their atoms to the pregnant whole

Of His great thought—Creation's mighty scheme !

Thou art the spirit that the mind may own,
The fair antithesis to dark decay :
And in thy existence by all laws we feel,
Commensurate with the Eternal's endless day.

From the low dip of Being's glowing plane,
Where trails the animalculæ along ;
Unto the topmost bar : from off whose giddy height
Echoes forever the bright archangel's song,—


Thy pulses thrill. Thy beatings curse or bless,
Through every quick gradation, still the same :
Waking the helpless soul to the keen stings of woe,
Or kindling up joy's wild ecstatic flame.

Thou art not God, and yet art part of Him :
Not man, and yet bereft of thee—
How rived the chain ! . How broken beauty's charm,
What plague-spots on fair Being's hand we see !

O, we have stood beside the silent tongue,
That, warmed by thee, had moved the world's
great heart ;
Gazed on the pulseless eye, whose burning glance
Once seemed of thy quick soul a living part,
Till all our spirit trembled with the thought
Of that great mystery, that doth its links emband
Round every soul ; that every heart may feel,
But none but its Creator understand !



CHAPELLE DU CALVAIRE.

 HERE'S a holy hush round the chancel,
where Music's soul hath been :

Sobbing in low, wild pleadings, for the bale of
mortal sin.

And a slender ray from the arches drifts away
in lines of gold

Through this lonely place,—where the anguish and
sins of the heart are told.

A fitful whispering murmur, like the sound of
distant waves,

Or the echo of Life's quick voices, in the solemn
place of graves,

From without comes trembling o'er us, along the
 bannered wall ;

Where the pictured saints are looking compassion-
 ately on all.

Far, from the ancient altar, where but earthly feet
 have trod,

Floats out the word of power, for the oracles
 of God ;

And where the stole and girdle, glimmer between
 the gloom,

Like a hollow wave's repeating, pours forth the
 penance doom !

Hot tears on the cheek of beauty, and the white of
 many a hand

Gleam through the minster twilight, as the sorrow-
 ful mourners stand

Bent, and bowing like willows, to the blast of the
tempest's breath ;

While the hurtling pangs in each bosom, seem akin
to the pangs of death.

Alone, in the troubled silence, treading the cold,
dark aisle,

I ask if the far bright Heaven hears the yearning
wail the while,—

And if He whose glorious presence thrills the great
universe,

Can joy at the quivering spirit, the blight, the
canker, and curse.

When, lo ! as the glory of morning floods into the
mournful night,


There flows a radiant vision ! blessing the tearful
sight ;

And a form that is fairer than angel, cleaves the
melodious skies !—

And a voice ! “ I will have mercy !—mercy !
not sacrifice !”



STARS AND STRIPES.

EAUTIFUL flag ! beautiful flag !
Floating from yonder spar ;

There is no banner so dear to me

As the one with the stripe and star !

Never a banner more dearly won :

Wide were the fields of gore,

And fierce and sharp the struggle, that gained

That flag in the days of yore.

I have heard the hale old mariner tell,—

Worn and covered with scars :

How it gladdened his eyes when he saw it float

Above him among the spars.

And amid the swelling tempest's surge,
And the hissing, lashing foam :
No storm could affright, no danger pall,
As he thought of the flag, and home.

I have seen the weary traveler's lip
Turn pale, as he told of the past,—
Of the fetter and bar that rankled sore,
In a far off prison cast ;
Of the earnest, hopeful prayer, that rose
As he drew the first free breath,
For the spotless fame of his country's flag
That saved her son from death !

C R O W N S .



THE Monarch's crown is bright !

Sparkling with gems and gold !

Of all the chaplets man can wear

'Tis the fairest to behold :

But it fetters the soul, and wears the brain,

And stings the spirit, with care and pain.

And the Warrior's wreath is green :

It seems a glorious prize ;

But it grows where the smoking life-tide runs

Beneath dark battle-skies :

The glory that on it so fair appears,

Are drops of blood ! and widows' tears !

The Statesman's brow is crowned—

Twined with the ivy and bay ;

He hath gathered the leaves in barren paths,

That have fretted his heart away :

And he holds their light at too dear a cost,

With youth, and peace, and honor lost !

Who hath woven the cypress wreath

For the Jove-like brow of the Sage ?

The hand of Science ! In Learning's halls,

As he bent o'er the mystic page ;

But the death-tree gift, that his soul hath won

Has doomed him to tread the world alone !

Over the Poet's faded face,

A slender chaplet gleams ;

He found the blooms by the river of Thought,

Away in the land of Dreams ;

With the feverish day and sleepless night,
He hath bought the perishing garland bright.

Then O, give to me the fadeless crown

Whose glory is not of mortal birth—

Whose beautiful blossoms unfold, afar


From the fitful scenes of earth :

It is braided by angel hands for all,

Who escape the bondage of Sin's dark thrall.



ABOU GOOSH.

 ID the white towers of Bethoor—
Old Bethoron, by the Nile ;

Rises high a grey mosque dome.

Its loud voice o'er many a mile
Reaching on the desert way,
Tells the pilgrim when to pray.

At the barbican's strong base
Sits grim Abou, stout and bold.
On his face dark deeds are writ
Human lip hath never told.

Far, he watches o'er the sand,
Girted by his robber band.

Bright his yataghan, his broad shield
Dashed by many a deadly blow :
Death-strokes of pale failing hands
Lying dead : where to and fro,
The green branches of the palms
Tremble in the summer calms.

Ruby, hidden in its cave ;
Blossom, budding in the gloom—
Fair-Star, in the turret dome,
Treads her sandal-scented room—
Abou's young Circassian queen,
In her robes of gold and green.

Attar-sweets are in her hair :
On her bosom's blushing snow

Pearly lights, red opal-fires,


With soft breathings come and go :

She, toying there with lute and gem,

Counts Abou the best of men !



FLAG OF ENGLAND.

AIL to thee ! Red cross banner !
On yonder mast afar :

On Freedom's scroll no light e'er shone

Brighter than thy one star !

Nor truer hearts nor braver hands

Hath the world ever known ;

Nor fairer land than that which claims

Thy glory all her own.

Undimmed thy prowess and thy fame,

On every land and sea :

O, I love the flag that first was called

The banner of the free.

Before whose light, in ages gone,

Dark Ignorance fled aghast ;

And one by one Wrong's shackles fell,

Till Liberty struck the last !

And over the world's crushed heart was shed,

The Charta's golden shower ;

When Truth, and Right, no longer fell

'Neath the iron heel of Power !

And ever and ever whereon the sky

Floats out that crimson sheen,

Above the gloom, the beacon torch

Of the Gospel light is seen.

God bless that flag ! and may it wave

Fair as it floats to-day ;


When the heart and harp that wakes this song

Forgotten have passed away.

Long as a nation's name is heard ;
Till nations and tongues expire,
May it float, not a ray nor an honor lost,
Fair flag of my ancient sire !



THE IMMOLATION.

IGH the funeral pile is raised,
Built of the sandal tree.

Sweetly chime the silvery waves

Here beside the summer sea.

All the airs are filled with sweets,

Gathered from the jungles near :

Why on every lip a sigh ?

Why in every eye a tear ?

Lo ! upon the flower-strewn way,

Cometh bare and tender feet ;

Wandering to the shining shore,

Once again, their love to meet.

Pale the snowy champac beams
On her clustered tresses' night ;
And her bridal veil once more,
Trembles on her bosom's white.


Hark ! how softly peal the bells !
Now the lapping flames ascend !
Now unto the Vishnu* god,
Every trembling knee doth bend.

* * * * *

O'er the sunset floats the cloud
Of the sandal fun'ral pyre :
Now the weeping bride hath found
Him who was her soul's desire.

* Hindoo Deity.


CHRIST'S GARDEN.

 **KNOW** an humble place, where deep and low
The solemn voice of prayer doth ebb and flow :
And sacred hymns go sounding through the aisle,
From hisping lips, unknown to sin or guile.
There, youthful faces look up to the light
Like flowers in the sunshine, meek, and white ;
And on young hearts with yearnings pure and true,
His free grace falls, like pleasant honey-dew :
And, as we linger in this sacred place,
Reading sweet innocence in every face ;
We feel, O God, some holy spots there be,
On sinful earth, inviolate yet to Thee :
Some pleasant ways, where angel steps still tread,
And hallowed blessings hover o'er each head.

No circled glories tint the lowly pane,
Save the red sunlight, and the silvery rain ;
No pictured grandeurs cluster on the walls,
Nor organ-tone within the stillness falls.
Naught but the visions of the soul arise
Waked by pure thoughts, that pointing to the skies,
Show where the Shepherd, in sweet pastures green,
Feeds the loved flock beside the living stream.
On whose fair banks, with flowery crook He stands,
With patient looks, and white imprinted hands ;
Forever mindful of the gardens sweet,
That lift their humble blossoms at His feet.



SONG OF THE FORGEMEN.

 O ! ho ! merrily ho !
Jolly fellows are we,

The rich man owns the valley forge,

And we his slaves must be !

Stir the embers till they blaze,

And make the cauldron boil.—

Eight long hours we've labor'd hard,

Yet two more must we toil !

Ho ! ho ! dash the ore

In many a seething stream ;

Turn your eyes to the darkness quick,

From the glimmering, blinding gleam.

Ply your sledges swiftly, boys !

And make the anvil ring ;

Fashion the sinews tough and strong,

While the song of toil we sing.

Weld the iron fingers sharp,

For the rich man's ship at sea—

He lies asleep on his crimson couch,

While we strike, one, two, three !

Free gift of the soil ! the yellow grain

Waves in the pleasant fields,

But golden harvest, or vintage full,

No gift to the poor man yields.

The fragrant sheaves to the garner borne,

The corn and the purple wine ;--

A scanty crust, and a squalid home,

And labor for thee and thine.

“The earth is the Lord’s, the fullness thereof”—

’Tis our brother hath made us slaves—

With fetters of gold he binds us fast

From the cradle down to our graves !

Ho ! ho ! merrily ho !


Jolly fellows are we ;

The rich man owns the valley forge,

And we his slaves must be !



THE BEREAVED.

OLD the pale garments together—
Away from my tearful sight !

Open ye wide the window,

Let in the 'morning light.

I would look on the bright'ning heavens,

Feel again the life-fraught air,

For my spirit is failing—is sinking

Into its old despair.

Far out, to the stream I went with her

That sweeps by Eternity's shore—

O, the shadows ! I feel them hovering

Over my heart evermore.

Earth's sunlight may never dispel them,
Though the glance may be lit with a smile,
The terrible flow of Death's river
Casts its gloom o'er the spirit the while.

I see her again sit beside me
In the calm of the autumn days ;
I hear the rapturous music,
Of her tremulous, plaintive lays :
The white of her hand is before me,
The hopeful and saintly face,—
Slow gathering over its beauty,
Death's shadow again I trace !

On its brightness dust now is gathered,
And surely the graves decay,
Enfoldeth the little white mantle
In the lone valley far away.

The path is grey mid the brambles


I have trodden in tears, and alone.

Father in Heaven ! now shelter

The broken and sorrowing one.



THE BELFRY

 HERE'S a belfry, dim and olden ;
It was fashioned long ago :

And the great bell in the turret

Swingeth ever, to and fro.

It was builded by a master—

Greatest of all builders he,

And for beauty, and for grandeur

None may match his masonry.

This belfry we are singing,

That hath stood through ages gone,

With its walls so grand and massive,

Is not made of wood or stone.

And the great bell in the turret,
That is sounding evermore,
Is not made of brass, or iron,
Or of any precious ore.

Yet its fastnesses ne'er waver ;
And its 'butments, they are strong,
And the Ringer never falters
In the chiming of his song.
Since when o'er the plains of Eden,
Waved the Angel's sword of flame,
This wondrous tower and Ringer
Hath held a mighty name.

The lofty and the lowly
Hear the music of the bell :
Ringing up and down its changes,
From the glee-song, to the knell.

When Chaldea's mighty horsemen
Sunk Israel down in blood,
Then Israel heard the waruing,
And called upon her God.

And the royal strains that echoed
In the great Augustine times,
Were the lofty, deep vibrations
Of the Ringer's sounding chimes.
And the tones that in the belfry
Swung like martial peelings down,
Gave to glorious Rome her Cæsar !
And to Cæsar gave the crown.

To the old Teutonic Fathers,
Saxon, Dane, and Gaul, hath he,
The old Ringer, rung his ditties,
And his boldest minstrelsy.

Never hath the tower crumbled !

Never has the true old tongue
Trembled, with its heavy burden,
Since the first day that it rung.


True, sometimes strange phantoms gather
In the arches dim and high,
And the rooks their black wings flutter,
Dimming oft the old man's eye.
Yet he heedeth not these visions,
But keeps sending his deep chimes,
Like a holy benediction,
Through all ages, in all climes.

Would ye know the grey old tower ?
And the stern Bell Ringer's name ?—
Grave old Thought ! we call the Ringer,
In the belfry of the Brain !

And the great bell in the turret,
Not made of ore of any kind,
With its ceaseless, strong vibrations,
We call the Human Mind.



H E A R T S E N S E S .

HEY are all gone now, mother.

One by one they have left the door ;

And here, in the silence deep, mine eyes

Keep watching the shadow on the floor.

Slowly it creeps out unto me :

Wanders and wavers to and fro ;

And as I gaze, I hear the sound

Of a river's sorrowful flow.

What can the shadow be, mother ?

The light in the dear old hall

Comes glinting down, in golden tufts,

On the pictures along the wall.

And garlands bloom in vases white,
Fair as in days of yore ;
Yet ever, and ever, to my sight
Moves the shadow along the floor.

Three spring times have come, mother,
Since I looked upon its gloom :
It seems like a dream, afar away,
Yet I mind the darkened room ;
And a face that used to smile on me,
Looked still, and calm, and white :
Then a silence fell low in my heart,
And a sorrow as dark as night.


Down in the soul's abyss, mother,
Its shade is heavy and wide ;
Though sometimes a fleeting ray flits past,
Like the sunlight over the tide.

But that was the last of the summer days—
In the spirit's winter alone,
In dreams, I have trod, and my heart may now
Claim kindred or kith with none.

But Hope sings a pleasant psalm, mother,
That when at the open door
Of thy mansion afar I come, there will be
No pall-shadow on the floor.
And the light of thy love-fraught eyes, mother,
On the soul's dark places shed,
Shall forever dispel the gloom that came
When they told me, thou wert dead !



OCTOBER.

HE rose hath blushed beside the stream,
The wild bird sang her summer song :

The sweet south-west, with fragrant breath,
Hath played the flowering boughs among.
And sights have dawned, and sounds have flown,
That but to summer hours are known.


Young Love hath poured his mournful tale

In many a gay, unlistening ear ;
While Pleasure's lip the bowl hath pressed,
Pale Folly's eye sent down the tear ;
And many a grief hath dimm'd the hours,
Since Summer waked her early flowers.

All these are fled : and sadly now,
Sweeps the rude winds along the plain ;
The solemn voices of the wood
Bespeak the Autumn come again.
Fair beauty's spell hath fled away—
Naught I meet but dull decay.

I think of one, whose heart mine own
Linked all its woes and joys with mine,
Whose starry eyes e'er yearned to greet
The summer's glow and soft sunshine—
Ere the first blossoms felt their bloom,
Those eyes were hid beneath the tomb !
But build the yule-fire wide and high,
And smile the winter hours away ;
Time's dial shows but little space—
Laugh while you can, laugh while you may.
And thou and I, though far apart,
Will strive to keep a merry heart.

VIOLETS ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

 PALE children of the Spring ! In this fair
nook,

By all your pleasant company forsook,

I find ye stricken, so disconsolate !

Mine eye e'en drops a tear at your poor fate.

A type ye seem of virtue sore distressed,

So marred and broken, in seeming woe oppressed.

What sights have dawned beneath these sunny skies,

To touch your hearts, and bow your timid eyes

Low in the dust ! as ye were never born

With smiles and cheerful looks the hills t' adorn.

Come, tell, sweet flowers ; for we are one apart

From the fleet crowd ; and bear a tender heart,

That doth commiserate with the ills of all
Swung on the balance beam : or great, or small ;
Hast—ah ! yes, speak on I pray,
And sympathy awaits on all ye say.

“ ’Twas on a lovely morn, when a soft calm
O’erhung the tender skies ; and like a balm
Descending, over all these ample hills
Settled the holy spell that quiet brings. The rills
Sang, in low cadences, their melodies ;
The birds awoke their love-calls in the trees,
And on the plain the merry plough-boy sped
His glittering share : the fair milk-maid
Tripped gaily through the dew, with flowing pail,
And from the neighboring farm the nimble flail
Its slumb’rous ditty sent through all the vale.
When, lo ! where yonder wood, so dark and high,
Looms like a temple ’gainst the northern sky,

A tumult 'rose—a deaf'ning clangor rung
Through all the airs. Like a strange knell it swung
Deep-toned above us. Trumpet-note and drum
Sent out their war-cry, as the host rushed on
With tramping steed, and flying, crushing wheel,
Bearing their death-locks, and bright swords of steel !

Then flew the plough-boy for his rusty gun—
The flail was hushed, though yet its task undone ;
And every home sent out its heart to meet
The savage coming of the foeman's feet.

Upon this field they met. Why did we live to see
Such cruel slaughter, such wild butchery !
Fast sprung the seething shot—the hissing shell
Burst its foul missiles where in scores they fell.
And the dread cannon flying o'er the plain,
Sunk down its thousands, ne'er to rise again—
Sunk down like Abel by the hand of Cain !

Here ran the life tide !—The gasping groan
Arose and fell till all the night did moan ;
And fainting forms groped o'er the sated ground,
Seeking for succor, but no succor found.

Choking voices murmured “ mother !” “ home !”
And some said “ it was hard to die alone !”
While younger ones, that did nor moan, nor weep,
But whispering, “ now I lay me down to sleep,”
Sank uncomplaining to their silent rest,
Like innocent babes, upon a mother's breast—
By mother's hand in gentle love caressed.


Then came the morn. In furrows deep and wide,
The silent foemen huddled side by side
By hastening hands ; tears sudden and big did start,
“ Like drops that melt from winter's frozen heart ;”

And many a lip that blanched not in the fray,
Turned deadly pale on that sad, funeral day.
And since that time, nor wing nor song of bird,
Hath o'er these desolate fields been seen or heard ;
Nor low of kine, nor plough-boy's rustic lay,
Nor voice of childhood, at the close of day
By yonder homes, where " Ruin sits alone,
Beside the fallen altar, and broken stone !"

My story told—Minstrel, dost wonder now
That blooms like ours droop down with dusty brow ?
Hiding our faces from the sights that tell
Man but a demon, and the earth a hell !



GEMS AND GENIUS.

HY seek to bring these meaner lights
to adorn

Thy manly face, thy noble, comely form ?

When every word seems like a jewel hung

On mellow chimes, dropt from thy pleasant tongue.

Not all the gems beneath fair India's skies

Could match the brightness of those lustrous eyes—

Nay, they would pale, though purest in their ray,

As fade the stars, before the god of day.

No need hath thou, in other lights to shine,


Than He hath lit within thy spirit's shrine ;

Whose glowing lustre, beaming from thy soul,

Wins all our hearts, and, winning, doth control.

Let the poor wight, well warned of lack of brains,
To aid his gravitation, put on chains :
And with the gems of mother earth supplied,
Make fair compromise, by lighting up outside.
But O, not thou, whose lofty mind serene,
Shows what thou art, and what thy sire hath been,—
Nature's ennobled, where honor stands abreast !
Or bright thy way, or by dark scenes opprest.
No other radiance thy bosom may require
Than that which springs from Genius' holy fire ;
Than that which Science's kindly hand hath shed
Like a pure blessing, on thy youthful head :
Than that which hovers in thy merry heart,
Gushing to all, as streams their life impart,
And marks thee one—the fairest and the best,—
E'en as the stars shine out, some brighter than the
rest.

THE RIVER.

 HERE is a narrow valley,
Where humid waters roll.

O'er the abysmal chasm,

Hastens many a soul.

Spectres strange and fearful

On the dark waves glide—

Death stands at the Ferry,

Christ the other side.

No pleasant sky illumines

The blackness of the night ;

And they who venture over

In the darkness lose their sight.

No flowers ever blossom

Near the cheerless, rushing tide,
Where Death stands at the Ferry,
And Christ the other side.

In that gloomy vale of silence,

The timid, and the strong,
Tremble, as they listen

To the stream that sweeps along :
Only Christian never feareth

What terrors there abide ;—
Where Death stands at the Ferry,
And Christ the other side.

Within his heart an amulet !

The price of holy blood—
The fire of living faith and love
Coming down from God.

Invincible, unfailing trust !


No dangers can betide,

Though Death stands at the Ferry,

Christ waits the other side !



TO A MINSTREL.

“VER of thee !” Euterpe sits beside
thee ;

The gentle goddess loveth well I know.

Methinks I see her glances beaming o’er thee,

Watching thy fair hands twinkle to and fro.

And other eyes, that speak the soul’s full story,

Linger upon thee ever, sad to part ;

Unto thy lyre’s song, and soft vibration,

Responsive oft they feel the tear-drop start.

“ Ever of thee !” It is a tender whisper,

That every heart must soon or late repeat.

Pregnant with joy, or mantling up with sorrow,
The lip may quaff the cup, bitter or sweet.

Philosophy, bay-crowned, and Reason wears the
laurel—

Well prized their lore, by every thoughtful brain ;
But Love, the rogue, with both had such a quarrel,
Alas ! I fear they'll ne'er be friends again.


“ Ever of thee ! ” Pale Dian, on lone Latmos,
Breathed out its woe in many a tearful sigh ;
And tender Pleiad took up the incantation,
Leaving her broken harp upon the sky.

And we have read of many a later story,
Of fountains true, that welled within the soul,
Pouring their sweetness on lone desert places,
Till Being's cup was but a broken bowl.

“Ever of thee !” Through all the sad mutations,
That lift their cycles in the future time :
In all things sweet, and truthful, fond and tender,
Shall murmur up that gentle song of thine.



H O M E .

IRE, that hath burned for me,
While my feet went weary ways ;
O, how grateful to mine eyes,
Beams thy sportive, cheerful blaze.

Heart, that waited long for me,
While mine own was bowed and sad ;
Thy sweet love, so deep and true,
Now dost make my spirit glad.


Lip, that yearned its tale to tell,
While I heard the word of scorn :
That because it loveth well,
It hath been so lone and lorn.

Gentle eyes, that in their tears,
Through the shadows looked afar ;
Now I see the light that seems
To my soul, its guiding star.

God ! who spares and chastens all,
Any cup I'll drink for Thee ;
But O stop this fleeting breath,
Ere there lives no love for me.



P A S T O R A L.

OW softly now the river flows,
How sweetly too the meadow-rose

Bedecks its margin green :

And golden lilies lift their heads,

Along the fields in gorgeous beds,

The slender grass between.

The young birds in the fragrant trees

Wake music, and the summer breeze

Sweeps softly down the sky ;

Upon the hills, the patient sheep

O'ercome by noontide slumbers deep,

In peace together lie.

The drowsy kine beneath the shade
The mantling willow-boughs have made,
In lazy rest repose.

And on the woodland skirts away
The deer looks out upon the day,
Nor fear of danger knows.

Upon the plain the ripe corn bright
Lifts up its banners to the light,
A gladsome sight to all :


Far glowing o'er the dim dark mold,
In brilliant flecks of brown and gold,
The wheat tops rise and fall.

A mellow radiance fills the air—

A spell of beauty everywhere,
Seems hovering from above ;

And, as I gaze with prayerful eyes,
I trace upon these glowing skies
The story of His love.

RURAL SOUNDS.

LOW down the mountain-side creeping
Comes the grey shadows of even ;
And, like bright golden lamps glowing,
Gleam the stars in the blue Heaven.

High in the dark pines the south wind
Maketh a low, pleasant symphony ;
Down in the willow the night bird
Warbles a soft lulling melody.

Away in the valley the yellow corn
Rustles its beautiful silken dress ;
And, in the moon-light, the wheat tops
Glimmer their silvery loveliness.

Up from the meadow comes evermore

Floating like incense, the clover-scents ;

And little chip munk sits nibbling

The green hazel here on the garden-fence.

Whirr-cher-a-bung ! from the mill-pond

Echoes out on the deep solitude—

Rat-te-tat-tat ! beats the pheasant hen,

Her reveille on an old log of wood.

Ting-a-ling ! tinkles the little bell,

On the old ewe in the pasture ground ;

Buz-a-buz ! twinkle a thousand wings,

Our blessed head and ears around.


Slow down the mountain-side creeping

Comes the grey shadows of even ;

And like bright golden lamps glowing,

Gleam the stars in the blue heaven.

THE VOYAGERS.

 APPY singers in the tree !
Care ye nothing more for me ?
“ Trill-la-la ! trill-la-le !”

Singing in the branches so,
While I'm weeping far below—
We have been true friends, you know.

Now the bird within my breast,
That would claim ye as its guest,
Beats and burns with deep unrest.

And I watch with tearful sight,
Pluming there for sudden flight,
The wings that leave me 'lone to-night.

Yet ye look out on the skies
With such careless laughing eyes,
As ye might our love despise !

All the summer we have sung
The green forest-depths among,
Where the heather-blossoms sprung ;

And the dog-wood star was bright,
And the briar-branches white
Swung their censers to the light.

Sadder was the lay than thine,
Full of tears—a strange old rhyme—
Breathings from a far-off clime.

Stories from the realm of dreams,
Flushing up from thought's still streams,
In mysterious, sudden gleams.

Where away, o'er bloomy wood,
Meadows, streams, and stormy flood,
Through the cloudy solitude,

Lies the viewless path ye go ?
Where the lime-tree's golden bough
To the south wind whispers low ?

Or the citron flower's bloom,
Sheds its light and soft perfume,
In the Indian forest's gloom ?

Fare-ye-well ! This bird of mine
Will not sing its quaint old rhyme
When ye come in sweet spring-time.

But down in the willow-tree
Wake, sweet birds, the "Trill-la-le !"
Sing it then for sake of me.

WILD ASTERS.



ASTER star ! bright aster star,

, No blooms I love like thine :

There's something in thy yellow eyes

That wakes the tears in mine.

Thou wearest the mountain's purple haze,

And the light golden sheen

That flecks the radiant summer skies,

When summer robes are green.

In childhood's time, while yet the dream

Of life still wore its rosy hue ;

No blossoms ever seemed as sweet,

As these fair stars of gold and blue—

No blossom had so pure a breath ;

We were true friends in those glad days—

Our lives two pleasant paralells,

Upon the silent mountain ways.

Though much of the sweet honey-dew,

Within my heart, has turned to gall

As o'er its treasures, one by one,

Old Time hath let his shadows fall ;

Yet Memory has golden lines,


Nor care nor grief may ever mar :

One grows brighter when my gaze

E'er meets thine own, bright aster star !



LAUREL HILL.

ADLY the tall grass is swaying
Over the silent graves :

Down by the low singing fountain,

The cypress and willow waves.

Softly the ivy is creeping

O'er tablet and sculptured stone,

Where the blue mildew is stealing

The memoirs off, one by one !

Here, in this still silent city,

The dwellers are ever at rest—

Folded are pallid hands lying,

Over each pulseless breast !

Ambition, or envy, or sorrow,

E'en love never enters here—

The heart has forgotten all anguish,

And the sleepers shed not a tear.

Nor the wail of the night-wind shall wake them,

Nor the glow of the morning skies—

The harness of labor is folded,

They no more to their toiling arise.

Old Death keeps the gate, and no passport

Leadeth from this domain :

They who enter the pale land,

Never go out again !

“How long shall they sleep?” says the angel—

’Tis the voice of the Angel of God !


“Man earned the right of this slumber,

When first he in Paradise trod.—

He shall be as the dust of the valley,
Till time, and all sin shall be o'er ;
When the Angel of deep Revelation shall come,
He shall wake ! He shall slumber no more !”



THE SCHOOL IN THE HIGHLANDS.

' WAS a crumbling thing, our old school-house,

With clapboards fallen and grey,
And windows aslant, where the summer sun
Shone pleasantly all the day.

On a bright green slope, near a dusty road,
At the edge of a deep, deep wood—
Far away from the stir of the murmurous town
In solemn grandeur it stood.

A holy quiet was lingering there,
And a spell of beauty too—
No banks seemed ever so freshly green,
No skies so mildly blue.

On either side the fragrant grain
Swayed its golden tassels bright ;
And across the road the orchard swung
Its fruitage to the light.

There the wild rose unfolded her vestal heart
To the sportive, dallying breeze ;
And the woodlark gushed her freest song
High, in the waving trees !

At rosy morn, and at eventide,
Meek faces came and went—
'Neath the arching boughs, that o'er the path
Their grateful shadows lent.

And though Time hath swept his shadowy hand,
Bright in the past we see
The scenes we loved, the faces too,
And cherish their memory :—

The mellow voice, the anxious eyes

Scanning the mystic page ;

The teacher too, with his thin white locks,

And form bent low with age.

The earnest tones that gently flowed,

When he knelt at even to pray,

And the trembling hands that in supppliance rose,

To bless us many a day.

Sad years have passed since we saw thy groves,

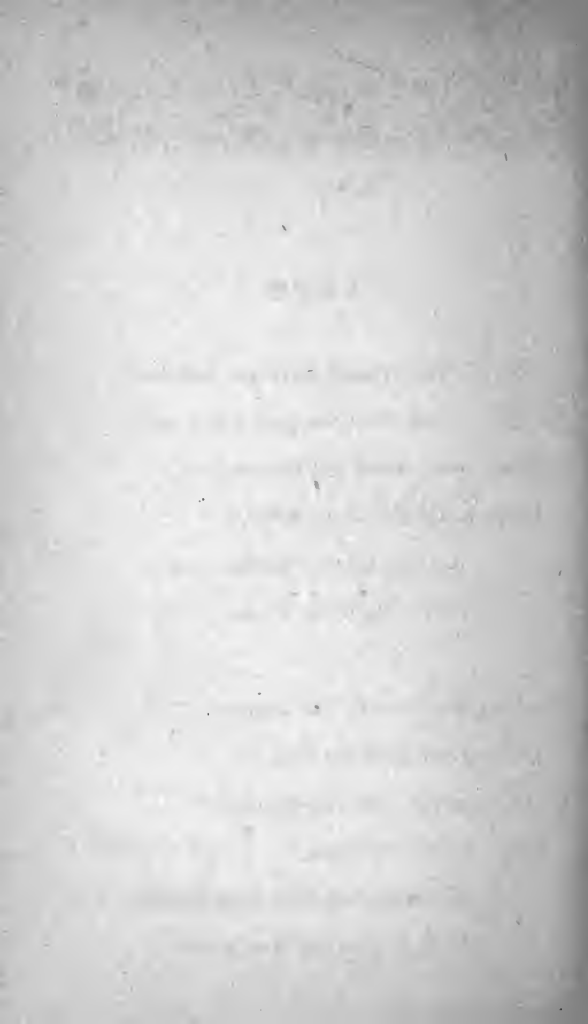
Old School ! yet our thoughts still dwell

With the sacred shades of our forest home,

And the place where we learned to spell.




THE GALLERY.





B E S S .

 ENTLE Bessie, have you seen her ?
Little Bess, the poor man's child,

Drifting down, where fall the shadows

Deepest, on life's ocean wild,

Bending low her slender form,

Like a lily to the storm.

You may know her by the sadness

Looking out upon her face ;

By the nameless lines and meanings

Only poverty can trace,

When he clasps the child of want

In his fingers pale and gaunt.

On her little childlike forehead

Lies the whiteness of the snow ;

And her voice so sweet, reminds you

Of a streamlet in its flow :

But it trembles with the sorrow,

Of to-day, and of to-morrow.

In her eyes we see the sunlight

Of the spring-time of the soul,

And the tears that oft bedim them,

Her full heart may not control :

When she wonders, why so poor,

Bessie begs from door to door !

She will tell you, if you listen,

That the cupboard home is bare ;

And in touching tones imploring

Of your plenty some to spare :

To keep back the wearing pain,
Of the hunger-pang again.

Ladye with the costly raiment !

Ladye with the jeweled hand !


Listen to your heart repeating

Oft the Master's sweet command :

He who helps by deed and word,
Lendeth to the Mighty Lord.



N E L L .

 N tattered robes, and with shoeless feet,
Little Nell wanders about the street ;

A heart adrift on life's ocean wide—

A floating leaf on the surging tide—

A blossom bowed to the tempest wild,

Is little Nell, the poor man's child.

Slowly she treadeth her weary way,

Asking charity, day by day ;

And many a word and look of scorn,

Is hers to bear, and to return

Only in tears, that swiftly chase

In quick succession adown her face—


Her lovely face, where the yellow hair,

Ripples along to her shoulders bare ;
And shields her neck with its folds of gold,
From the summer's sun, and winter's cold.
Nellie is fair—upon her cheek
Pale roses bloom, and her blue eyes meek
'Neath their fringed curtains steal away,
As violets hide from the light of day.
Her little story is often said,
As in sobbing tones she asks for bread—
“ Her father sleeps 'neath the green turf low,
Her mother is sick and helpless now ;
She, too, alas ! she fears will die,”
And the breath comes short, and the gushing sigh
Chokes the words ; and she weeps aloud,
Standing alone in the rushing crowd.
Oh ! ye, who on the Sabbath day,
On broidered cushions kneel to pray—
Who in graceful cadence your voices raise,

Neath frescoed arches, in songs of praise—
Who garner earth's treasure and pleasant soil,
And forge the chains for the sons of toil;
Remember poor Nellie, who asketh a crust,
And think of your treasures, that mildew and rust:
Think of thy brothers and sisters fair,
Who bow beneath burdens heavy to bear—
Of him who starved in the days of old
At the rich man's gate, who loved his gold.



THE SEWING GIRL.

LL day long she sits to sew,
Patient, and pale, and still,—
Fading away like the slender plants
That bloom on the window sill ;
She heedeth not the beauty that floats
Over the blushing sky,
Nor heareth the pleasant melody
Of the wind's low lullaby.

Through the misty mazes of ruffle and hem,
And flounce, and band, and seam,
Her fair fingers wander, till her thoughts
Are lost, as if in a dream ;

And swiftly the stitches come and go
O'er the glittering needle bright,
From earliest dawn of the weary day,
Until the deep midnight.

The roses are pale in her youthful cheek,
Yet she is very fair—
Simple her robe, nor ringlet, nor braid
Adorneth her glossy hair,
That waveth its shining beauty along
Her temples, and falling low,
Clusters in golden tufts upon
Her neck, that is white as snow.


She is making silk gowns for ladies fair,
Who never toil or spin,
Yet she murmurs not, the pray'r she is saying
Keepeth her heart from sin—

Keepeth her heart from asking why
Her burdens are heavy to bear,
While many whose forms are far less frail,
Are strangers to toil or care—

Keepeth her spirit from asking who
Are forging the chains for the poor !
Why some are doomed to famine and want,
And others have plenty in store !
All day long she sits to sew,
Patient, and pale, and still—
Fading away like the slender plants
That bloom on her window-sill.



THE FISHER'S DAUGHTER.

 ULU walks beside the sea,
Where the waves come evermore ;

And her heart is sobbing, sobbing

Like the waters on the shore.

O'er her shoulders white and bare,

Like shriven gold, the yellow hair

Wildly floats. On her breast

Her snowy hands like lilies rest.

All day long she waiteth there,

Gazing out upon the foam

Till the sun hath left the heaven,

And the sea-bird seeks her home :

Till the young moon hangs her sickle high,
Golden, in the silent sky,—
And amid the mist afar,
Trembles alone the evening star.

Lulu had a lover true,
Who went down upon the deep,—
Now, beneath the surging waters
Lulu's lover lies asleep.

She is mad ; and all things seem
To her spirit like a dream,
As she waits upon the shore,
For his coming evermore.




N I A G A R A .



ALL hail to thee, Niagara ! Monarch thou,
Before whose echoing thunders, every sound
Shrinks tearfully away ! The pilgrim heart
Bowing in deepest homage at thy shrine,
Trembles, and sinks in fear ! The admiring eye,
Pressed by thy startling grandeur, droops in tears :
And the frail lyre that would its sweetest strains
Invoke unto thy praise, alas ! grows dumb.
Bright as the stars ! thy mantle : and thy crown,
The circling bow wherewith He spans the heavens.
And thy cloud-shadowed feet, even stand as once
At Israel's tent, thy glorious Maker's stood :
Of whose great majesty and power sublime,
His hand hath formed thee evermore to speak !

HOME IN THE CATSKILLS.

’ IS a rude old home ; a cabin low,
Of stone unhewn and grey,

Afar from the stir of busy life,

Beside a mountain way.

O’er the dim walls fresh clinging vines

Cast down a glowing sheen,

And stately elms along the path

Nod their fragrant branches green.

A pleasant calm ever hovers down

In the radiant breathing wood,

And murmurous mellow sounds awake

The purple solitude :

The sighing wind in the tasselled pines,
The wild birds in the trees,
The laughing streams, the ferns among,
Gush sweetest melodies.

The aster gleams its purple stars
Around the rustic door,
And with the light the shadows play
Along the oaken floor—
The bare old floor, that ne'er hath known
Or weft or soft disguise,
Save the chequering beams of gold and grey
That fall from the mountain skies.

Returning seasons bring their bloom,
And the kindly soil repays
Hands that are never slow to learn,
Industry's cheerful ways.

Bright waving wheat-fields sway and glow,
Like dots of gold, between
The gnarled groves, and patient herds
On flowering plains are seen.


An aged face, in the summer days,
Looks up to the arching sky ;
And drowsy ears are listening oft
To the humming lullaby
Of the busy wheel, where a maiden fair
Treadeth to and fro,
Weaving a soft and glistening woof,
From wool that is white as snow.

And white is her hand—her little hand
That is glimmering all day long
In the snowy fleece ; the while her lips
Breathe out a wild, sweet song,

In the humble home, the cabin low
Of stone, unhewn and grey,
Standing alone, on a bright green spot
Beside the mountain way.



M A Y .

 HERE'S a blush on the sky !
A balm on the air,

There is music, and beauty,

And bloom, everywhere—

The young flowers peeping

Over the hills,

The white laughing fountains

The whispering rills,—

All welcome the beautiful Spring !

On the green meadows

See the lambkins at play ;

Where the children are twining

Their white buds of May.

And old age wanders forth

With a smile and a tear ;

O, the rich and the poor

Hail the child of the year,

The beautiful, blossoming Spring !

The yule log has burned

On the bright winter hearth,

And the holly-bough smiled,

O'er our song and our mirth.

But away with the holly !

And bright Christmas tree :


Old Winter's cold reign

Brings no treasure for me,

Like the beautiful, blossoming Spring !



PICTURE OF MIRIAM.

AIR maiden minstrel ! as I gaze on thee
Standing alone upon yon rocky cliff,
Thy simple vestures swaying in the clasp
Of the wild desert wind : thy flowing hair
Like a dark mantle o'er thy shoulders cast,
Thou seemest more than woman. Blessed forms,
That in th' glad days ago, with sinless feet
Trod the green valleys of the virgin earth,
Rise to my vision.

But thou art only woman.


High o'er thy heaving breast the timbrel-lyre
Wafts to the pillar'd cloud its rushing hymn ;
While streaming eye and tremulous lip foretells,
Th' ecstatic burden of thy soul's sweet song.

No taint of earth wells there on its free tide ;
But holy love, in its pure vestal flame,
Springs heavenward to th' eternal light that keeps
Forever clear and bright, Faith's altar-fires.

“ O, sing unto the Lord ! O, ye people !
He hath heard your cry ! He hath delivered you.
The spear and the helm hath He broken !
The horse and the rider hath He laid low.—
Fear no more, O Israel ! Thine enemies,
The lightnings of His vengeance hath destroyed !”



HOMESTEAD ON THE MOHAWK.

 ONLY it stands in dim decay,
Our house on the grand old hill ;
The pride of its ancient glory is past,
And the mildew creepeth sure and fast
Over roof and crumbling sill.

The spider weaves her glistening woof
Over slanting window and door,
But the sunlight falls, through the shattered pane,
And floods with a golden beauty again
The desolate, broken floor.

High on the wall the hop-vine climbs,
Where the stones have fretted away—


Where the chrysalis hangs his cup of gold
Among the leaves, o'er the ruin old,
And waits the awak'ning day.

The swallows still build in early spring,
And the sweets of the garden bloom ;
But the grateful sound of pattering feet,
And voices low, in converse sweet,
Ne'er gladdens the silent gloom.

O ! a solemn lesson to the heart
Speaks in the ruin grey,—
Of broken links in love's bright chain,
Of joys that never come again,
Dashed by Time's hand away !



E V E.

OWN by a flowery fountain
Sits Eden's fair maiden, Eve ;

Slow through her sunny locks flaxen,

Ever her white fingers weave.

Low at the brim of the waters,

Like lilies, her snowy feet lie—

Sinless, the thoughts of her bosom,

Tearless her beautiful eye.

Soft, through the light dripping foliage

Floats the sweet breath of the gale ;

Bearing the fresh drifting fragrance

Of the spice blossoming vale !

Numberless voices are murmuring

Deep melodies up to the skies,

And in mid-air gleams the pinion

Of the bright bird of Paradise !

As in a dream sits the maiden,

The wonder of angel and man ;

The bright locking link of the future—

The germ of creation's great plan.

Nor vision, nor thought hath possessed her :

Listless, as if in a dream,

She knows not her soul ; but, wildering,

Looks at the gold-bedded stream !

Lo ! through the leaves amethystine

Gaze her blue, starry eyes—


The joy of her spirit returning,

Blesses with sudden surprise !

Adam, long gone in the vineyard,
Coming down over the plain—
But at his side, lo ! an angel,
Bearing a bright sword of flame !



THE INSANE.

 HERE'S a sobbing sound—a wail of
woe !—

An invalid paces to and fro,
And pale hands wander along the wall
Of a little room in a mad-house hall.
Stern misfortune overtook
His spirit ; and reason her realm forsook.
And many a dreary day has come
And gone, since he saw the light of home.
There are none to dry the dews that now
Are gathering fast upon his brow,—
None to hear the gushing sigh
Of this last fearful agony.


A cry of pain ! A plaintive moan
Comes out on the night,—“ Must I die alone ?
Shall these eyes close, and never more
Gaze upon aught that was dear before ?”
Hark ! There’s a hast’ning, hurrying sound,
The bolts unbar with quick rebound,
And tones as harsh as th’ tempest’s breath
Are heard in that desolate place of death :—
“ Cease thy raving ; or down below
To the darkened cell thou shalt quickly go !”
’Tis the keeper’s voice.—The night wind’s sigh
And a silent tear, is the sad reply.

’Tis morning. Over the sanded floor
The sunlight falls : and the bolted door
Is open now. On a white couch lies
One who met death’s agonies

Alone.—A smile on the pallid face
Is all of suffering the eye may trace.
Rigid and cold on the pulseless breast
The folded hands in silence rest ;
And one who could not be forgiven
On earth, has found a home in heaven.



THE STEP-DAUGHTER.

 LOOK of woe is on her face—
A shadowy look of gloom ;

As listless through the lonesome day

She goes from room to room.

Her eyes are red with many a tear—

Hot tears in secret shed ;

And her shining curls in a tangled mass

Are matted about her head.

Oh ! never a kind, kind word for her ;

To others all belong ;

In childish strife, or in childish play,

She is ever in the wrong.

And she dare not laugh, when others laugh—

There is an angry face

She dreads, and a hand whose marks on hers

In purpling lines we trace !

An ugly face frowns now, where one

Once loving and lovely shone ;

She sighing looks on its wicked lines,

And thinks of the bright one gone :

Of the kindly eyes, and low, calm voice,

Whose tones, tho' long died away,

Left a memory sweet around her soul—

A joy that will ever stay.

Sometimes she walks the dusty road,

Gathering the crimson leaves,

Or from brook-side flowers, with curious skill,

A motley wreath she weaves ;

And places it, with playful pride,
Over her little brow—
Over the face, the mirror of one
Asleep 'neath the earth-clod now !


As sweet, and still, as the lilies pale
That bloom by that brook-side ;
Yet all uncherished, uncared for too,
As the weed upon the tide.
None look to see where the little feet
In their wilful wanderings roam,
None haste to welcome, at even-tide,
The unloved wanderer home.

O ! we have seen stern manhood left
Mid stream, with helm nor oar ;
And woman's heart, in the darkness left
Of its sin for evermore ;

And Want's pale cheek ; deserted age ;
The fair and early dead ;
But the bitterest tears our eyes e'er wept,
For the poor step-child were shed.



CHRIST BY THE SEA OF TIBERIAS.

ESIDE the sea, He stood. His shining
feet

Casting a mellow radiance on the sands ;

And circling like a belt of living light,

Upon the dark and solemn waters fell,

The glory of their God.

No traces dim,

Of damp sepulchral glooms, a shade has left

Upon the glowing robes. No thorned braid

Embands the snowy temples.—Waving there,

Beams the bright shadow of the crown He wore

Within His father's kingdom.

O, blessed voice ! O, blessed hands that sought

Another proof of love to offer there
To weak and faithless hearts, that turned aside
When th' dark shadow of Thy sorrow lowered
Its deepest, mightiest shade.

Upon the tide,—
Dashed by the fitful current of the waves
Through the long weary night, a little bark
Trims up its fretted sail toward the land.
Hunger and cold are there : and the unrest,
That earnest toiling brings to empty hands.


But hark ! What music sways upon the wind !
A tone sweet-sounding as an angel lyre,
Had wafted its soft echoes through the night.—
“ Cast down thy net once more, and thou shalt find ! ”
O, Peter knew his Master's voice : and quick,
Girting his fisher's mantle round him, sprung
Through the cold waves to worship at His feet.

Thou ! Blessed Lord ! So let the Christian soul
In sorest gloom and tides of sorrow feel,
The kindly light of Thy beloved eyes.
And from the World's high tempest, unto Thee,
Amid her tears, turn quickly evermore
To hear Thy voice above the rocking storm.



TO A NUN

IN THE SACRED HEART CONVENT.

ER cheek has lost its bright rose of
red,

And pensively droopeth her beautiful head.

Her white hands are wandering evermore

The gilded rosary o'er and o'er ;

And up at the starry chancel of Heaven

Her spirit pleadeth to be forgiven :—

For the sin of her love, or the sin of her hate,

For all that hath left her so desolate :

For the wildering dream that she dared not speak

Of passion, that caused her young heart to break.

She hath sought in the cloister to part the chain

That bound her fast, but again, and again,

Betwixt the prayers, the vision comes ;
And she listeneth not to the monotones
Of the choiring band, nor the melody
Of the pale ones chanting the “ Ave Marie.”
Earth and its beauty is naught to her.
She is only a silent worshiper,
And hath chastened her heart from all earthly stains
With tears, and prayers, and penance pains !
Around her in sacred niches, stand
The imaged saints ; and with pallid hand
She ever pauses to cross her brow,
Murmuring the “ Pater Noster ” low.
And as she lingers, the amber light,
That falls on her face and bosom white,
Such ethereal beauty shows, that she
More angel than mortal seems to be.

THE MILL



ON'T you remember, Lill,
The mill by the old hill side,
Where we used to go in the summer days
And watch the foamy tide ?
And throw the leaves of the rocking beech
On its surface, smooth and bright ;
When they'd float away like emeralds,
In a flood of golden light ?

And the miller, Lill, with slouchy cap,
And eyes of mildest grey ;
Plodding about his dusty work,
Singing the livelong day,

And the coat that hung on the rusty nail,
 With many a motley patch,
By the rude old door, with broken sill,
 And string and wooden latch.

And the water-wheel, with its giant arms
 Dashing the beaded spray,
And pulling the weeds from the sand below,
 That it tossed in scorn away.
The sleepers too, bearded and old,
 Frowning over the tide ;
Defying the waves, while the chinks of Time
 Were made in the old mill's side.

Well, Lill, the mill is torn away,
 And a factory, dark and high,
Looms like a tower, and puffs its smoke
 Over the clear blue sky.

And the stream is turned away, above—

The bed of the river is bare ;

The beech is withered, bough and trunk,

And stands like a spectre there.

The miller, too, has gone to rest—

He sleeps in the vale below ;

They made his grave in the winter time,

Down where the willows grow.

But now the boughs are green again,


And the winds are soft and still ;

I send you a sprig, to mind you, Lill,

Of me, and the rude old mill.



EARLY SPRING.

 HERE is something balmy, something
sweet

In the wind as it murmurs by ;
And a rosy blush is swaying, swaying,
Over the clear blue sky.
The fleecy clouds have a golden fringe
As they float to the west away—
Returning life, returning bloom,
Heralds the bright spring day.

The lilac is waving her fingers blue
In the garden, and over the mold
Fair Spring is spreading softly now
A carpet of green and gold.


The unfolding maple and alder leaves,
Exhale to the warm sunlight
Their gift of fragrance, and on the hedge
Are nodding the May-blooms white.

The limpid streams in the meadows sing,
The birds carol in the trees ;
And like specks of amber, floating, floating,
Waver the honey bees.

O, there's a spell of gladness and beauty,
That comes with the blossoming time ;
That flows to the heart, in sorrow enfolded,
And 'tis hovering o'er thine, and mine.



DISOWNED.

HEY tell me that my home is fair
As when I left it years ago ;

Still smile the skies as brightly down

On fragrant hill and lawn :

The clustering vine, whose whispering leaves

Made mellow music round the door,

As softly murmurs, sweetly blooms,

As in the happy days of yore.

They tell me that the wild bird wakes

Her song beside my lattice yet :

The voice that carolled with her own

Her free wild heart may not forget ;

And the fair willow-trees, that swung
 Their glistening branches to and fro,
Still o'er the summer window seat
 Their grateful murmurs throw.


The brook that in the shadow swept
 A silvery gleam the road beside,
Dimples along its shining bed
 With the same unchanging tide ;
And the white thorn grows beside the stream—
 Ah ! well I know its shady place :
The alders too, whose purple boughs
 Drooped o'er the stream's white face.

They tell me that at eve is heard
 In the old hall, the sounds of mirth ;
And grateful voices wake the soul
 Of music round the ancient hearth :

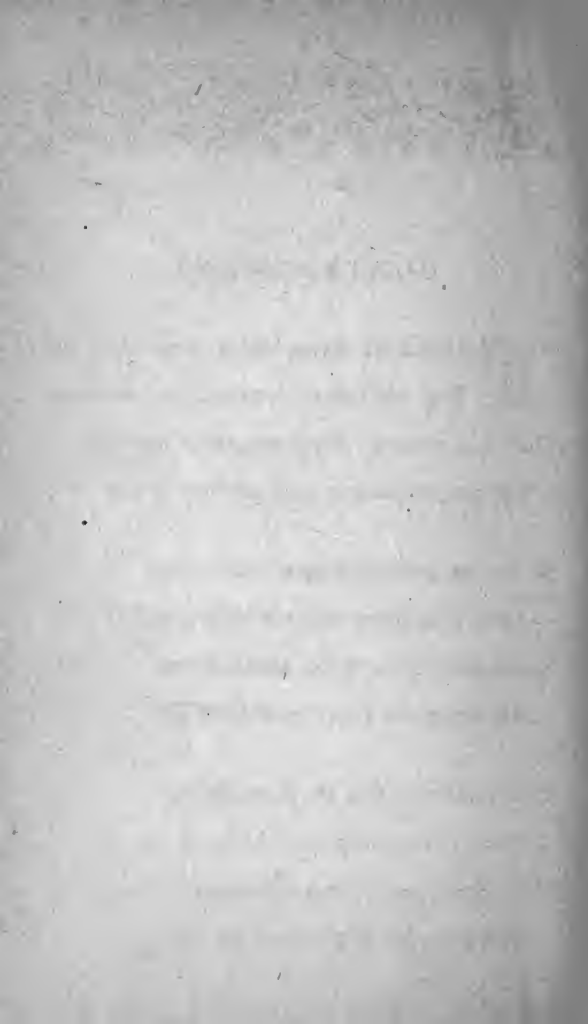
That many an eye grows dim with tears,
When by fond lips my name is spoken—
Alas ! that ties so dear could e'er,
By chance or change, be broken.

Though now along the darkened moors
My weary feet are hurrying fast,
Sweet Memory's bright and shining chain
Still binds me to the past ;
And from the fearful desert way,
Whose cheating mirage lured me on,
My soul looks back, with fondness yet
To thee, my loved, my broken home !



 LINE of ambers, (quaint old nursery tale,
Old as the hills; one of Eve's own no doubt)
Strung round the throat, or young, or old, will rout
All forms of cankers : fever, plague, and pest
That pluck at th' life, and sting the unwary breast
Till it lie prone ; a clod within the vale.
So, kind Philosophy's tender truths enshrined
Like amulet gems, encircling the mind ;
Keep at strong bay the fiends that clutch the soul.—
Doubt, Fear, Despair, Love, Hate, own their control.
And frayed sick hearts, o'er wearied topling brains,
Counting the jewels o'er, forget their pains.

THE AMBERS. .





CONTENTMENT.

THERE is a saying that we reck a true one,
That what we have, we slightly less esteem
Than that we seek : if e'er our grasp eluding
The ignis-fatuus may past attainment seem.

So bent on perverse purposes, the mind
Against its peace will ever build a wall :
Seeking a brighter Eden, always keeps
Repeating o'er the story of the Fall.

It is the hunger that the Satan charm
Cast o'er our mother, as she sat alone ;
Whose poison spell forever haunts the heart,
Consuming all its pleasures, one by one.


The mist that hangs its veil of silvery blue
Upon the mountain side, or hill afar ;
At near approach, is but the rising dew,
Whose chilling damps may all thy breathings mar

The Iris bow that lures the wondering gaze,
Spanning the azure arch in curves so fair ;
Is but the mirage-show that Beauty's hand
Hath cast upon the gloom and tempest there.

Joys we may claim are ever lingering near ;
Humble and lowly though their light may be,
We'll find them springing flower-like in our way,
And falling like sweet blossoms from the tree.

Clasp them ; and treasure as the gifts of Him
Who gave the golden talents in days of yore.
And God, who watches for thy gratitude,
Will, for thy faith, increase thy little store.

THE SOLDIER.

 ATRON, hast thou any crumbs
For a grey-haired man to-day ?
I'm not poor, good lady kind,
But my home is far away.

I have a mansion grand and fair :
Far and wide my lands are spread ;
Yet a stranger here, at times,
Know not where to lay my head.

Look not on my garments thus—
They are thin, I know, and old ;
And when blows the wintry blast,
Scarcely keep me from the cold :

But within my stately home

I have regal robes to wear ;

Pure, and white, and costly too,

They are waiting for me there.

I'm a soldier. I have fought

In many a battle—fierce and hard :

But the kingdom that I serve

Is not slow with its reward.

Should I ne'er repay the deed,

When my Captain comes this way

He will not forget the crumbs,

That the matron gave to-day.

Then the matron broke the bread—

“ Tell me where your country lies ?”

Then he answered—pale and tearful,

Ah ! my home is in the skies.

And my home is in the city

Whose broad pavement is of gold :

Where the mildew never enters,

Nor the moth, nor rust, nor mold.

The great warfare I've been waging,

Is the warfare against sin.—

Nothing wicked or unholy

Can at the City enter in.

And the King who leads our army,

He is called the Christ of God.—

And the banner of our country

Is besprinkled with His blood.


Thus the old man ever wandered,

Treading slow from door to door,

Saying : Give me ! Though I'm hungry,

I am rich. I am not poor.

FRUITION.

' IS all the same. If not, know it soon
will be ;

Though now thy feet may tread the thorny way ;
Time's changing glass shows all things are but
shadows,

And life itself is but a fleeting day.

Toil but for good ; and never reck the scorner—

Better than smiles is the word of blame ;

It will unloose the bonds the world hath on thee,

And show thee praise is but an empty name.

Mourn not. If in thy cup the draught is bitter,

Bitter is wholesome,—safer than the sweet—

Sorrow may wear the heart, but it will chasten,
And make thee fairer, His pure smile to meet.

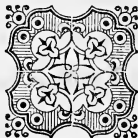
Faint not. Though others hold a flowing measure
And thou hast ever but an empty hand ;
Lose not thy faith ! 'tis but the ban and falsehood
That man hath written o'er God's pleasant land.

Even as on the flowers fall the rain and sunshine
Equal and free ; so doth His tender care
Cover His children : 'tis but thy wicked brother
Hath stolen thy birthright, and robbed thy
goodly share.

But the fair paths of virtue still pursuing,
Aim at the right, however sad thy fate ;
Some joy shall crown thee, if thy hand still scatter
Its drop of balm to the disconsolate.

Then, when the day fast hastening shall o'ertake thee,
Though poor and broken and covered o'er with
blame ;

If He shall claim thy purpose and thy effort
For its fulfilment, it will be all the same.



THE MAIDEN'S FRIEND.



MAIDEN, why so happy? within thy
quiet eyes

No sorrow-drops e'er gather, nor threat'ning storms
arise ;

And evermore unto us, thy sweet tones come
and go

Like a silver bell's soft pealing, or a streamlet in
its flow.

Upon thy brow's sereneness no marring shadows
creep,

But holy thoughts seem welling, from thy soul's
abysses deep,

And cluster up their whiteness amid those veins
of blue,

As the beauty of thy forehead was the spirit,
shining through

Then the maiden to the minstrel said : I have a
pleasant guest,

And she evermore unto me is a joy, within my
breast ;

And she sings a gentle story—a sweet celestial
psalm—

All the ills of my young spirit it healeth like a balm.

Her robes are pure and snowy ; she hath no taint
of sin :

Wherever she abideth no deep woe may enter in—
Despair, nor Hate, nor Envy ; nor all the dread
array •

Of Passions, that beleaguer and fret the soul away.

This maid of whom I tell thee, is not of mortal
birth ;


She hath come from a far city, to defend the souls
of earth ;

And guarding their fair portals, she maketh strong
defence

Against all sin, and sorrow ; and her name is
Innocence !



H U M I L I T Y .

 HERE is a face that oft times unto
me

Turns from its stony casement grand and high ;
Looking with pleasant glance, as it besought

Of all the throng that idly pass it by,
Some eloquent recognition of the claim

It makes upon fair Beauty : so the row
Of puff, and band, and bead, that link it round
In fashion-lines, at least would seem to show.

There is a haughty meaning in its air ; yet more

Of vanity than pride the eye may trace :

A lip and cheek—one wonders how such depth
Of bloom could blossom in such little space.

'Tis what the world calls fair ; nor young, nor old,—
Somewhere betwixt the autumn and the spring—
Just where the storm and sunshine of the mind
Their true transferrings to the features bring.

Its glance is icy cold ; and if it smiled,
Methinks the ray would quickly come and go—
A surface gleam, and to the vision bring
A thought of winter skies, or moonlit snow..
Then there's another face, that sometimes peers
From its low lattice meekly up to mine ;
And when it looks, 'tis as a sudden light
Within my heart, and on my path did shine.

The beauty in it is such as we trace
In humble flowers,—fairest on closest view :
A pale bloom cheek, a brow serenely calm,
And hopeful eyes of tenderest, softest blue.

It has a look of sadness, as the heart

Had read its lesson from a shadowy leaf ;

Yet so becalmed, as if the prayerful soul

Had kept at bay the keener stings of grief.

There are no flash adornments : no array

Of garish traps that cry—come, me behold !

But sweet simplicity has smoothly laid

On either side, the locks of auburn gold.

I know an innocent spirit dwelleth there ;


Angel or woman—closely they are akin

When truly either, shedding like a balm

Their gift of goodness in this world of sin.



THE WATCHER'S WARNING.

ICK ! Tick ! Tick !

Whose hand is over the page
Of the strange, dark book ye read ?

Treading from youth to age.

Blind and old am I—

Of eyes ye may have two :

Who tells the mystical line

The better—blind me ? or you ?

Tick ! Tick ! Tick !

List to the tide of Time

Flowing over thy heart.

Dost hear the wave's low chime ?

Thy face is young and bright,

Like mine, it will soon be old,—

Go, while thy days are long,
Get thee wisdom and gold.

Tick ! Tick ! Tick !

Orchards and fields of bloom
Out in the Future dim ;
And desolate fields of gloom,
O'er fallows rough and wide,
Await thy coming feet.

Cast from thy soul the bitter—
Cherish the good and sweet.

Now, while I count the hours
With my weird voice full of tears,
Now gather in the honey
For the gall of coming years.

Let Innocence walk beside thee,
And, where e'er thy path may be,
Or ever so black the desert,
Some flowers will spring for thee.

BUNCH OF RUE.



THE FORSAKEN.



H ! 'twas a pleasant dream that thou
did'st love me ;

Too full of bliss, too bright, too dear to last :
One by one its vestal lights have faded—
All perished now within the silent past.

Gone like the radiance that illumines the morning,
Or like the fragrance on the wild winds borne :
Fled like the bloom that parts the blossom,
When from the dewy stem the flower is torn.

Life hath no boon : Hope no promised blessing,
Now that the joy of loving thee is o'er ;
Yet every breath shall breathe the invocation,
That Heaven may bless thee, now and evermore.

And though pale Sorrow hath wrapt her mantle
round me,
And walketh with my spirit night and day,
Fond thoughts of thee—memories pure and holy,
Like rosy visions, cheer the lonely way.



CAPRICE.



LACK a day ! 'tis a sad thing at best,

To fall a-love-sick in the pleasant spring ;

I could not think this friend within my breast,

Would do its owner such a sorry thing.

The story I would tell, but then the world

So cold, might take small interest in the theme ;

And, smiling at my woe, would only jest—

Call it a brain-chimera, or a dream.

So I will lock the story, with the love,

Close in the soul's fair vestibule away—

Perhaps he'll come to find, in some far time,

The one—'tis a deep doubt, but then you know,
he may.


I would not have him know, for mines of gold,
How evermore before my tearful eyes
His image comes, and fades, then dawns again,
Till all my breathings are but love-lorn sighs.

With lagging step, I wander to the hills,
Wooing the calm that gentle Nature brings :
The turf is green, the airs are soft and bland ;
And in the wood young Cyane sweetly sings.

The hedge is feathery white ; the violet blooms,
And minstrel Bob, in the new-budding tree
Wakes his cantatas ; but alas ! I hear
Only the tones of one, who never thinks of me.



CANZONIE.

 HELTER me in thy heart, beloved,
In thy generous, gladsome heart ;
And, like a dove let me nestle there,
Never again to part.

I will sing fond lullabies, beloved,
Pleasant strains of melody ;
And I'll be a source of light and joy
And happiness unto thee.

The world is cold, without, beloved,
But thy heart is warm and true -
I see its kindliness welling up,
In those beautiful eyes of blue.

In those beautiful eyes of blue, beloved ;
Whose light hath woven a spell
Around my soul ; that will not part,
And it longeth with thee to dwell.

Then shelter me in thy heart, beloved,
In thy generous, gladsome heart ;
And like a dove, let me nestle there
Never again to part.



O NOT FOR ME.

NOT for me, the joy to know,

One treasured thought of thine to share :

The grief, the burden, and the tears,

Are mine, alas ! alone to bear.

Nor would I cast one shade of gloom

On aught so glad, so gay and free—

I would not charge thy careless heart

With one sad thought of me.

The mountain roses that exhale

Their fragrance to the lonely skies ;

As sweetly breathe, as freshly bloom,

Although unseen by mortal eyes.

The gushing stream that sweeps its tide

Mid barren wastes and vales along ;

As purely springs, as freely flows,

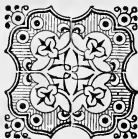
As if by flowering banks it sung.

Forgive me then if unexpressed,


Within the cloister of the soul,

Sweet thoughts of thee, like incense burn,

Nor pride may check, nor will control.



COME HOME.

OME home ! come home ! The violet has
faded,

And the pale heath-flower bloomed for thee in
vain :

The fair laburnum, now thy seat hath shaded,

Where waits the rose to meet thy smile again.

Come home ! come home ! Sadly the summer voices

Echo their sweetness through the lonely hours :

Nature's soft lyre no more the heart rejoices,

And Love is weeping in the time of flowers.

There rests a gloom upon the pleasant places

Where once thy feet have trod :—a tearful
shade—

A presence gone ! a joy the mind retraces,

Like the bright memories mirth and music made.

O ! there are lips that may not greet thy coming,

That on thy way their purest blessing lent ;

Eyes that e'er bore the story of their loving

Sleep, where the yew and cypress shades are
blent !

Yet though the blight of change the chain hath
broken—

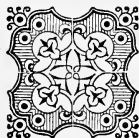
Though the death-shadow on the altar rest ;

Still, round the hearth, thy name in fondness
spoken,


Tells of a home unchanged within the breast.

Then, wheresoe'er thy listless steps are straying,
Where waits thy heart in pleasure's bloomy
way ;—

In song of bird, or stream, or low winds sighing,
Hear the sad call that beckons thee away !



THE DREAMER'S WEDDING.

REAMED of thee : upon the shining
shore

Of a green summer isle we strayed ; where evermore
Washed the white waves ;—ringing their echoes
sweet

Like silver bells, around our listless feet.

On either hand the feathery jungles lay

Twining their fragrant arms around the bay :

Their dewy sward, bestrown with fairest flowers,

Breathing their sweetness to the waiting hours.

Around us rose the Coco's domes of green,

Hiding her juicy gifts her leaves between ;

And like an Indian maiden decked with gold,

The young Banana, gorgeous to behold,

Bared her brown bosom to the glowing sun,
Stringing her glittering cones up one by one.
Above us, trembling in one shining woof,
The linking boughs run out a shadowy roof ;
And budding palm, and scented sandel tree,
Sent down their sweets, beloved unto thee ;
While birds of rarest song sprung up to meet
Along the flowery way thy coming feet.
There, as we strayed, a quiet Sabbath rest
Fell to our hearts. All that once oppressed,
Of yearnings deep, that scarred our lives before
'Neath other skies, now vexed our souls no more :
Ambition's fires—the thirst for gold or fame,
Had died away from fevered breast and brain.
And memories of wrongs that we had known,—
Dealt by near hands that we had held our own,—
So that the hurt was deeper ; these were passed,
And we had run our sorrows to the last.

As thou art fairer than all others, now,
Thou wert e'en fairer then ; upon thy brow
No shade of care I saw. The spirit's calm
Had settled o'er it like a pleasant balm.
And in the sunlight of thine azure eyes
My constant heart read only love's replies.
We wandered on not heeding where we went
Till, where the trees a heavier shadow lent
Along a hollow,—widening to the sea—
Engirt with many a glistening bamboo tree ;
In a green covert, half hidden o'er with flowers,
Arose the bright Pagoda's golden towers !
Upon its snowy steps knelt many a maid—
Young Armenian girls, in white arrayed ;
And kneeling priests bent there, muttering prayers,
Chaunting low tedeums, hymns, and solemn airs.
There as we gazed, thy voice gentle and low
Fell like a bell's soft chime, or streamlet's flow ;

And with a slight embrace upon my hand
Whispering, thou said'st, "now these shall join the
band ;


And link us one, so that we never part ;
And link us one, and link us heart to heart."

Then tears of joy came gushing to mine eyes
Where smiles were blent—like rainbows in the skies,
As underneath the white Pagoda bell

I promised true to love thee long and well ;
And while my lip the earnest vow confessed,
Quick from thine own, a tender kiss was pressed—
It was the first—I awoke ! th' dream was past !
And then, beloved, I knew it was the last.



DEAD ROSE.

EAD rose ! thy blush is with the bloom
Of yester-summer, yet I see
Still on thy pale lips mute and dumb
The trembling tale they told to me—
Sweet tale they told to me.

The heather-bells are bright, to-day
In the reedy hollows the fox-glove blows,
And on th' fallows flushed and fair
Full many a white cup grows—
O, many a white cup grows.

Yet here in th' shade of the sycamore
I sit with thee, till my heart asleep

Hearing the story wakes and mourns ;

But I will not let her weep—

No, I will not let her weep.

His love is dead, pale rose ; far out

In the purple Past it drooped and died ;


And I felt the pain :—Ah me ! ah me,—

Thus sore to have moaned and sighed,

Long to have moaned and sighed.



LUCY AND I.

ER feet were in the sunshine ; and gay
rings

Of flecking light swayed trembling to and fro
On the long grass ; and on her baby hands
Dropt down the white of many an apple-blow—
Dropt down, as from a cloud, the flaky snow.
Softly the May-born winds crept through the leaves,
Lifting the shadows from her yellow hair,
Till it was all a-gold ; and she was crowned—
Crowned in her infant day, by signs so fair :
Queenly in beauty, queenly in voice, and air !

She bade me bring her blossoms from the vine :
I brought : the branch snarled on my tender hand ;
And pebbles from the brook : amid the reeds
I sought, and from the pearly, shining sand
Purple and white I drew—at her command

Within my yearning palm the dark ones held ;
And, marking the sweet promises of the tree
Fall steadily at her feet, with boding heart,
Read with still tears the three-fold prophesy
The stream, the light, the blooms held out to me.

'Tis twenty years ago—and Lucy's hand
Still holds the toy ; nor hath her feet e'er found
The ways of gloom—dark ways, where Love is lost,
And prayers are heard not ; nor, to Death
strong bound,
Trodden with trembling to the burying-ground.

Aye, twenty summers gone ! bold augury !
Through all their effluent bloom thy gleam I trace,
And ask the mystic record what it tells.
Faith saith, God loveth all ; we read His ways
Dimly, and veiled—far from his holy place.



ROBERT.

1892

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ROBERT.

 HERE the dark Adirondacs far re-
moved

From the quick sounds of busy life, arise
Like undulating billows 'gainst the sky ;
Green with the feathery cedar and the pine
In summer, white in winter with the easy snows ;
There, in the shadow of the tallest summit,
Encradled in a hollow from the winds,
Rises the grey roofs of a little village.

Slender and sparse th' houses, perhaps a score ;
And a rude spire wherein is hung a bell ;

Which ne'er is rung save on grand occasions—

Weddings, or fun'rals, or on holidays.

Through th' hazed distance sounds the whirr and
whistle

Of the black horse of iron, puffing his hot breath

O'er the green valleys : and along the mountains

Echo his tramping feet, on daily errands

To th' far city that lies beyond the hills.

Here, long ago, when upon the openings

Stood the thick forest, and th' brawny timber

Linked its strong arms against the sun and storm ;

And in th' under-shadows lurked the panther,

The prowling wolf, and cunning catamount ;

There came from o'er the sea a pilgrim band

Who, for the sake of venture and the good

That unto all shows brightest when afar,

Had left their father-land : where they, not rich,

And yet not poor, had gained their honest bread
From the kind friendly soil.

But five they were :

Robert, the father, a hale and happy man
In the midsummer of his lightsome years ;
His wife, a matron fair ; and two young lads :
Twin-brothers they ; so tall and thrifty grown,
They looked two twelve months older than their
years.

Besides, a daughter. Like the matron she—
Gentle of speech, and kind in all her ways—
They called her 'dove' within the eagle's nest.

On a bright spring they came. Hewing their way
Little by little from the far off road,
That wound its slender line of untrod grey
Across the burgher clearings. No small store
Had the good man supplied, and housed within

His canopied and ponderous wagons :—
Huddled together, closely packed, the tools
The farmer knows ; glittering share and scythe,
Harrow and spade, axes and smaller craft
For lighter working ; and a long array
Of household implements, that th' careful dame
Well knew the need ; and had with housewife care
Treasured 'gainst future want.

When the full wains,
Laboring and creaking through th' rutty ways
For many a weary day, at length arrived
To the green valley where the rude old spire
Now points its slender finger to the skies,
They rested,—as rested Jacob, long ago—
And pitched their tents amid the lonely hills.
Then o'er the trees on the pure vestal airs,
Arose the white cloud of th' first household fire
That e'er was builded in this wilderness.

Here, as the Patriarch on the plains of Haran
Bowed himself down, making his earnest vows ;
The father knelt him low upon the ground
With all his younger ones : and prayed, and sent
His tears of full thanksgiving on the sod :
On which he asked God's blessing,—that to them
It might bring forth abundantly and bless
Th' earnest toil their hands might bring upon it.

Ere yet the young moon rounded to the full,
Robert, amid the sturdy pines had felled,—
The young lads helping him,—the needful trees
Wherewith to build their lodge. Fast fell the strokes
On limb and bend, till rounded and complete
The timbers lay. And, with few flooring boards
His clever foresight banded on the wains,
With lime to weld the weather gaping chinks ;
As Noah builded in the solitude

Far from the world apart his mighty ark,
So raised the farmer with many a prayer,
His little home within the wilderness.

They, well supplied with corn and pleasant meal,
Had naught to fear from want. The untrod wood
Teemed with wild game. The timorous deer,
The bear, the elk, and sturdy buffalo
Thrid through the hazy windings of the trees ;
And from the heavy undergrowth below
Falling entangled, oftentimes became
An easy prey for e'en the younger ones.

The virgin streams unknown to net or line,
Yielded abundant to their frequent snares ;
And many a wing, by innocent hopeful breast
Plumed for a journey that it never made,
Sunk bleeding oft times at the cabin door,—
Sank down, as fell the quails at Israel's tent.

As moves the steady wheel in circuits round
Upon the polished axis, so the years
One like the other in its thrift and joy,
Sped round their pleasant cycles. The housewife,
With gentle mien and speech that seemed to bear
A healing balsam to the hearts of all,
Trode patiently about her daily cares ;
While Robert and the lads toiled at th' clearing :
Felling the huge trees : dragging into heaps
With their strong ox teams, bough and lighter brush,
Till over all the hills went up the cloud
Of their great fallow fires.

Soon unto them—

Ere yet five summers passed—the farmer saw
On the crude land where he had drop't his tears,
The glad fulfillment of his earnest prayer ;
White glowed th' wheat-fields ; and ripening in
the sun

The yellow corn ears lifted up their gifts ;
While at his feet, like a bright net-work spread
The golden treasures of the lowly vines.

As the young cedars, comely grew his sons ;
With all their father's steady will, and girt
Lightly with mother's tenderness of thought ;
So that the good man saw within the lads
The grateful promise of his coming years.
The daughter, too, was lovely as the blooms
Her fair hands nurtured ; and for her content,
Nestling within her bosom like a dove,
Sweet Innocence made all her inner life
E'en as the cheerful sunshine ; and she seemed
The radiant centre of the household heart.

While the fifth summer rested on their heads,
Unto the mountains came the man of gold .

Buying up lands. Large tracts he bought, and oft
Made the long circuit of the rutty road—
Bringing on teams, and men.—Upon the stream
That gushed the widest from the rocky height,
Builded a mill : wherewith to turn the pines
And fragrant cedars into silver and gold :
For these he loved. Stern Mammon was his god.
And he, to serve him well, as men oft do
Turned all things to his unholy service.

Not one half year had passed, ere down the vale
Through the blue silence swept the busy din
Of the wide wheels ; tearing with their bright teeth
The great wood's heart. While fast the noisy arms
Reared like a wall the stately yellow piles
To build the city that lies beyond th' hills.

Thus to the farmer's home the outer world
Began to creep ; and the good man at this

Was glad ; for he, unused to solitude,

Unto his patient wife ofttimes deplored

The lonely aspect of the mountain skies.

And, pond'ring too, as thrifty men are apt,

On what the change might bring in time to them,

Saw a kind Providence laying out his way ;—

His lands would be more value : and his grains,

The surplus of their need could he not sell ?

And so put little money in his hand

As every year went round.

So as he turned

The brightness of his future in his mind,

And all things counted well ; suddenly came—

Like as the thunder booms from cap to cap—

The slowly wafted tidings of ill news.

Far o'er the waters swept the angry roar

Of the great Sea Lion : and he had called

On his young whelps to sap the Eagle's life.

Columbia bound already was the fleet

Upon her steady way ; and fiery War

Brooded his gloomy pinions o'er the land !

Then cowered the strongest hearts. Yet there was
one

Who blanched not ; but stood boldly forth, and armed

With valor for his breast-plate, and his hand

Grasping the sword of Right, against the Wrong,

Went calmly out to meet them.

Then his voice

Called loudly out for help ; and to each heart

Fell e'en as falls the voice of one we love :

For which to succor death is sweet as life ;

And in the balance they seem even weights.

Long had the bugle sounded. Steady and long

Were the dark files of living lines that went

Down to the bloody fields ; and never more
Turned back their homeward steps. At length one
day,

Unto the valley came the woeful news,
That he to whom all eyes turned as their star
Was in sore press.—Needing true hands to hold
His wise and well planned purposes.

And now,

Where the old Hudson wheeled his rocky course,
Held the brave hearts their cause ; but shadows
lowered—

Their numbers were but few ; their strength far spent ;
And even the most hopeful seemed to see
Th' rising star of Liberty fading dark.

Then fell the Leader's voice to Robert's heart.—

“ Yes, he would go ! Would not his willing hand
Strike its one blow for that great cause of Right,
For which a Hampden's honest English heart

Had chafed its life out in the dungeon cell !—
Yes, he would go !” Ever within his thoughts
Burned up the fire th’ earnest patriot knows,
Until it capped all others. Then as one
Who, bearing blossoms to the grave forgets
The utterances of woe within his breast ;
Unto his wife, strewing his speech with hope,
He came telling his earnest wish : said he,
“ Is not this land mine own ? and these my_lads
Growing amid its mountains, unto them
When I am gone, shall it not seem the same ?
Surely the dust that holds a father’s bones
Will be most dear.—The wheat I mind to-day
Sets for its kernel,—yonder as I trod,
Clipt me right strong upon the knee, and gives
The cheerful promise of a goodly store.
The faithful lads, now almost grown to men,
Would they not ’tend to all ?—The easy soil

Needed but light working : all would be well.
And who could tell the service he might give ?--
Was not the stream even by the pebble turned !
And his one hand might be as David's was
In th' far days of old !"

Then patient Rachel,

(Such the good wife's name,) went sadly bowed
Gathering and binding up his garments :
Mending and making—in many a seam
Sewing the tears that spite of prayers would fall ;
While trying to hush within her soul th' cries
Of her strong wedded love. Full well she knew
Her husband's iron will ; for he was one,
Though kind and good to all, yet bearing a mind
That like a torrent ever tore its way :
And would not brook the bands, though they were
bound
By love's own tender hands.

Not many days

'Till all was ready. Then the good man gave
Order for this and that,—as far-seeing men
Are prone to do when leaving for a space
Their steady cares ; as if the good or ill
Of their fulfillment would be sure to fall
Upon them when they come.—So the veiled mind
Gropes wildly through the future, blind, and dark.

Swift sped the dreaded day ; and when it came,
Beside the door stood the strong ox-team, slow
Dallying with their horns in easy play,
While near them lounged the workmen from the mill ;
And the rich owner ; turning in their thoughts
The venturous purpose that th' farmer held.

Then for the first, there did the farmer's sons
Blanch at their grief. One asked to go instead,—

“ For sure,” said he, “ Mother will die at this !—
To see thee never coming at the door.”

Then spake the father sternly. And again
Said “ it was God’s own service ; and to hurl
Back to his face, the Tyrant’s wicked blow.”

But when poor Rachel looked into the eyes
That e’er had been the sunlight of her life,
She had no voice : but kissed him long, and
turned

Her back upon them all ; and so he went.

Down through th’ wood watched Rachel and her
daughter

The vanishing team : and after many days,
Came the one brother back telling the tale,
That he had seen him all aboard the craft
For the great seaport bound ; and ere that time,
His earnest feet had found the far-off camp.

The summer passed. The winter ; and the spring
Lit up her blossoms on the mountain ways,
And yet no tidings. Oft times th' housewife saw,
Or seemed to see, amid the changing boughs
In the far distance, the returning team
His hands so often drove ; and at its side
Walk'd Robert, treading slow. Then when the
Night

Lowered her silent darkness on the vale,
Her list'ning ear caught often at the sound
Of some approaching footstep on the sill.—
So wakes the heart, when Love keeps sentinel.

As sorrows—always wedded, go in pairs ;
One autumn to the vale a death-wind came :
And at it many sunk down to their beds ;
But Rachel's daughter—timid, broken flower,
Bowed down her lovely head to rise no more.

She, gently ling'ring through few tearful days—
As peaceful in her death as in her life,
Went uncomplaining unto her last sleep.
And when they made her grave the rich man
mourned ;
And oft at twilight wandered to the place,
Pulling the weeds from where the lilies grew.
And some did say that had she lived, his heart
Had softer grown, like unto other men.

The mother bore her sorrow well, and kept
Her faith in Him who gives and takes away.
“He loved my child.”—Sometimes in her home talk
“And so He took her”—she would say; as if,
Catching the reed, to save her from despair.

When on young Edith's grave the tardy Spring
Twice woke the violets ; tapping in the wood

The sugar-yielding maples, Joseph's hand—
(Robert and Joseph were the brothers named)
Struck boldly on an adder's cowering head.
Whereat the viper maddened and wrothful,
Unto the bone, sent on its venomous fangs
The fatal quick death-poison.—Ere the sun
Once made his circuit past the cabin home,
Joseph, his mother's best and faithful son,
Lie dead before her !

Then did Rachel's soul
Feel the hard iron stroke that makes the pulse
Shudder till all is numb ! To her all things
Seemed but as dead.—Even the God she served
Was not in Heaven ; and if he listened still,
How could she pray ? Alas ! she could not pray ;
But felt her spirit turning 'gainst her God
As did the soul of sorrow-stricken Job.
Another grave was added to the first :

And, like the links of a fine woven chain,
When one frets off, the next parts, then the next—
Till all the beauty of the meshes fade.—
So went their lives.

The brother lonely left

Oft times strolled idly to the tavern near ;
Leaving his patient team and buried plough
Midway the field ; and the long lines of hedge
That Joseph's hand had raised with farmer's care,
Fell in wide gaps, thriftless and unrestored :
Where tearful Rachel, talking to herself,
Strayed with her whitened basket gathering up
Against the winter's want, the tiny fruit
That hung about the thorny bramble ways.

Unto what scenes of fortune or mischance
Had Robert come ? Fast to the seaward sped
The steady downward tide of Hudson's wave,





Bearing the little craft where he had met
The ready welcome that the soldier gives.
Soon round the camp-fire did his earnest ear
Drink in the tales of war. The deep drum calls
That made the midnight morn,—the weariness
That made the morn as night, soon from his mind
Shut out the thoughts of home. And when he
stood,

In the long battle-line whose hunted track
Bent toward fair Trenton's hills, O, then he knew
Th' exultant joy that thrills the hero's breast.

But when t' his vision dawned the red-cross flag
Like a bright beacon light upon the hills,
True to the hand that set it as a star
Within all hearts, glowed up the deep home love.—
“England ! my home !—my flag ! my flag !” he
cried,—

As swept swift Memory's picture to his gaze—
The homestead grey, the pleasant garden lawns,
The places where he wandered when a boy,
The church where he was wed : and then he saw
His elder brother's hand sweep all away !

“ O, what is it,” he cried, “ within me here
That makes me as a suckling ! Have not my feet
Trodden as Ishmael trod the desert ways ?
Hath not mine empty hand the fountain found !—
Here be my altars ! Here my home !” And when
The bold chief waited on the battle-eve,
As waited Gideon o'er th' snowy fleece,
Then from good Robert's eyes the tears were dried ;
And all his soul was girded with new strength.

Amid the seething death-shocks, his true hand
For many a weary day and sleepless night

Kept th' stern bond that he had set upon it.
And many a gaping line did his quick feet
Wall with a steady front that was not thrown ;
As God had bound him in His bundle of Life.

At length it chanced,—as in the solemn night,
He, treading the lone ways the sentry knows :
His thoughts like dreamers wandering away
Unto his mountain lodge,—that, in the dusk
And bushy shadowed covert of the hill,
Two forms he spied ; and by th' unsteady light
Of the pale stars, lo ! the crimson and gold
Of the king's soldiery fell upon his sight !
Already had they well nigh passed the lines !
And, with th' suddenness of a wakened man,
Poising his gun—" Who goes ! Who goes !" he
cried.

But with the breath sent out the fatal blow.

“Long live the King ! !” shouted the British brave !

As staggering to the sod he bore the steel

A brother’s hand had sent into his heart !

“That voice ! That voice !” wailed Robert,
mournfully,

As rushing to the spot, alas ! he saw

His mother’s eyes look upward from the ground !

Down at his side sank Robert, dead as he—

As dead ! For what of life is left within

The anguished breathings, when the deep keen woe

That stills forever the sweet pulse of joy

Falls on the helpless life ! Turning the world

Into one burial place : where all the airs

Breathe evermore of death.

For many days

The good man languished in the solemn place

Where sobbing moans rose thick, and pale Disease

Like a grim vulture gnawed at every breast ;

And yet he recked not. Reason had forsook
Her wonted sway ; and through his burning brain
Ran but the lava stream of fever's fire.

There as he lay, down by th' shadowy gate,
Through the dark portal drifted out to him
A gentle whisp'ring calm.—As a soft gale
Flower-fraught and balmy from th' near Heaven
had swept,

Bearing its peace unto his inner life.

No longer burned Cain's curse upon his brow ;

Nor in his spirit e'er again was lit

Th' fire it once had known. Gentle and becalmed

From his sick bed he rose, a broken man :

Yet bearing in his soul a kindly hope

That he had gathered by th' kingdom of Peace.

While in the coast towns merrily rung the bells

Their songs of glad rejoicings ; and the hills

Blazed with red victory-fires, Robert turned
His feet once more toward the wilderness.
Slowly, with long delays he came. And when,
The trees like famed Hesperian branches hung
Heavy with death-frosts, bright with reddened
gold ;

From the far burgher road, with scanty store
Kerchiefed in soldier's guise, he bent his way
Fast toward the cabin door.

Many a word

Of fond and kindly cheer his thoughtful hand
Had sent unto it ; and from Rachel came
Once to the camp, that all was going well.
Now, sweetly the quiet of the solitude
Crept down upon his thoughts. The very stones
Looked up their welcome ; and the dreamy songs
Of the tall soughing pines, fell on his ear
Like the soft greeting voices of old friends.

But when he heard the drowsy humming call
Of the swift mill, and met the leaping wave
Of the bright stream that swept beside her home,
He saw no more : but list'ning to the voice
Whose music once more met him on the hills,
Lo ! he stood by the door !

Over the porch
Drifted the heavy creeper from the eaves.
And the thrift vines that drooped for Edith's hand,
Gnarled on the grass-grown path, bowed with dead
blossoms
That e'en the winds had spared from blossoming time.
There as the good man stood, nor voice nor sound
Breaking upon his yearning ear, he turned,
And noted for the first the thymy ferns ;
And the tall thistles budding their blue blossoms
Upon the garden beds. Then sudden and quick,
Like as a serpent slipped upon his heel

He left the spot. Treading toward the mill,
As one who listens to unearthly sounds
From which all other souls are bound, he heard
God's boding voice from out the silence speak,
That Rachel was no more !

“ I'm come to ask,
Of her who lived in yonder cabin there,”
Said Robert, pale, unto the careless group
That idled round th' yellow lumber piles. The men,
Gazing at each in asking way, knew not ;
Nor could tell aught—save one ;—he knew her son.
But knowing th' sorrowful story of the home,
And noting the soldier's faded blue, forbore ;
Lest he should be the man.—Then, as they spoke,
The rich man stood beside him.

The deep love
That even to young Edith's ear was dumb,
Wrote there its record on the soldier's hands.

“ Tell me !” spake Robert,—marking his falling
tears,

“ Tell me ! and tell me all !—But well I know,
The vengeance of my God has fall’n on me !”
Firmly the man of gold turned back his heart ;
And locking it with calm and stolid face,
Held up the tale of death.

Of Edith first :

Then of the lad that died. Last of Rachel,—
Who, what with grief and spirit-loneliness—
Counting him dead whom her true heart loved
most,

Grew heedless of herself ; and roamed about
The desolate mountain ways, like one astray
Within her mind ; talking to senseless things—
The streams, the airs,—even as she would bring
Something from Nature’s life, to mourn with her.
When, on one morn, like as the tide had ebbd

So long, had little left to part ; she passed away,
While they who watched thought that she only slept.

“ His vengeance !” muttered Robert ; as his head
Sunk heavily to his breast ; and all his frame
Shook like the shivered tree beneath the storm.
Nor word nor tear escaped him. The still stroke
Fell in upon his heart and broke it.

Lone,

In his desolate cabin, he went down
Unto the shadowy vale to which all men
Are treading. And when the spring flowers stood
Like patient watchers round good Rachel’s grave,
They bore him there. Then the grey preacher
said—

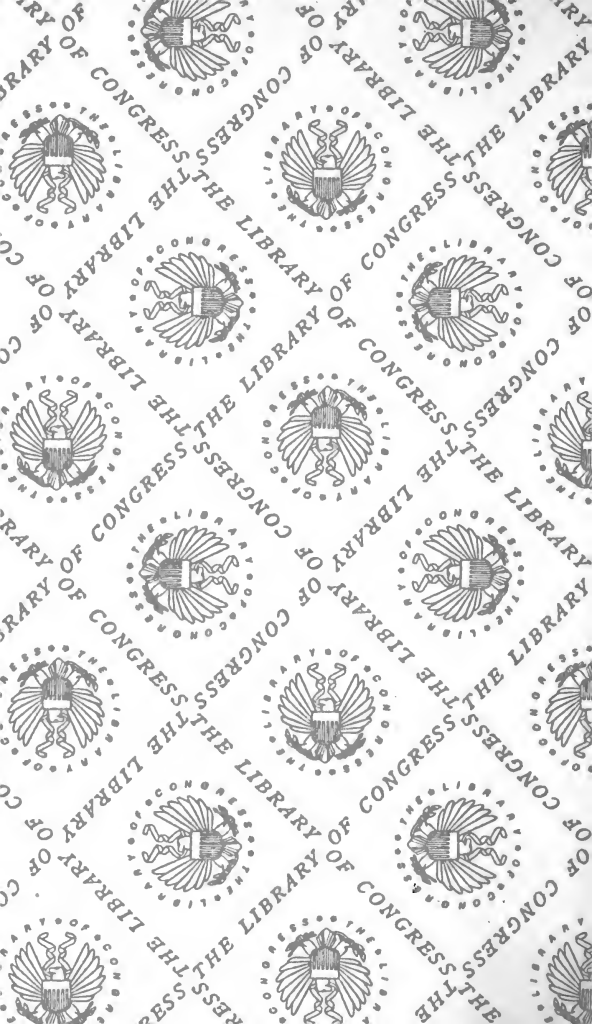
“ Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord
Imputeth not iniquity ; and in whose spirit
There is found no guile !”

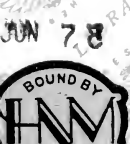
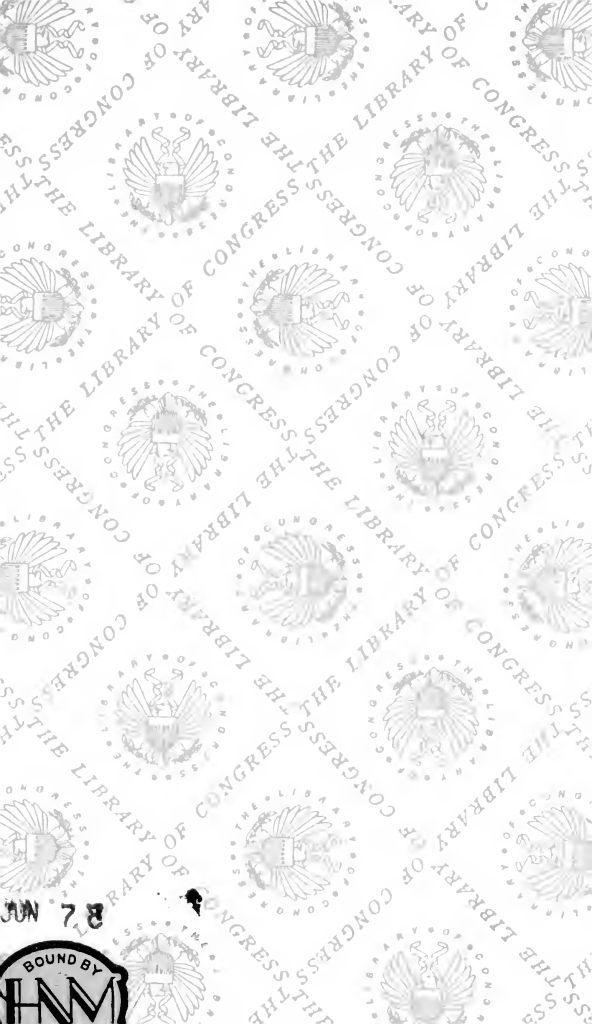
So ends the simple story of the wood ;
A story of Columbia's stripe and star,
Whose reddened glories drifting on the skies
Your eye may note to-day.











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